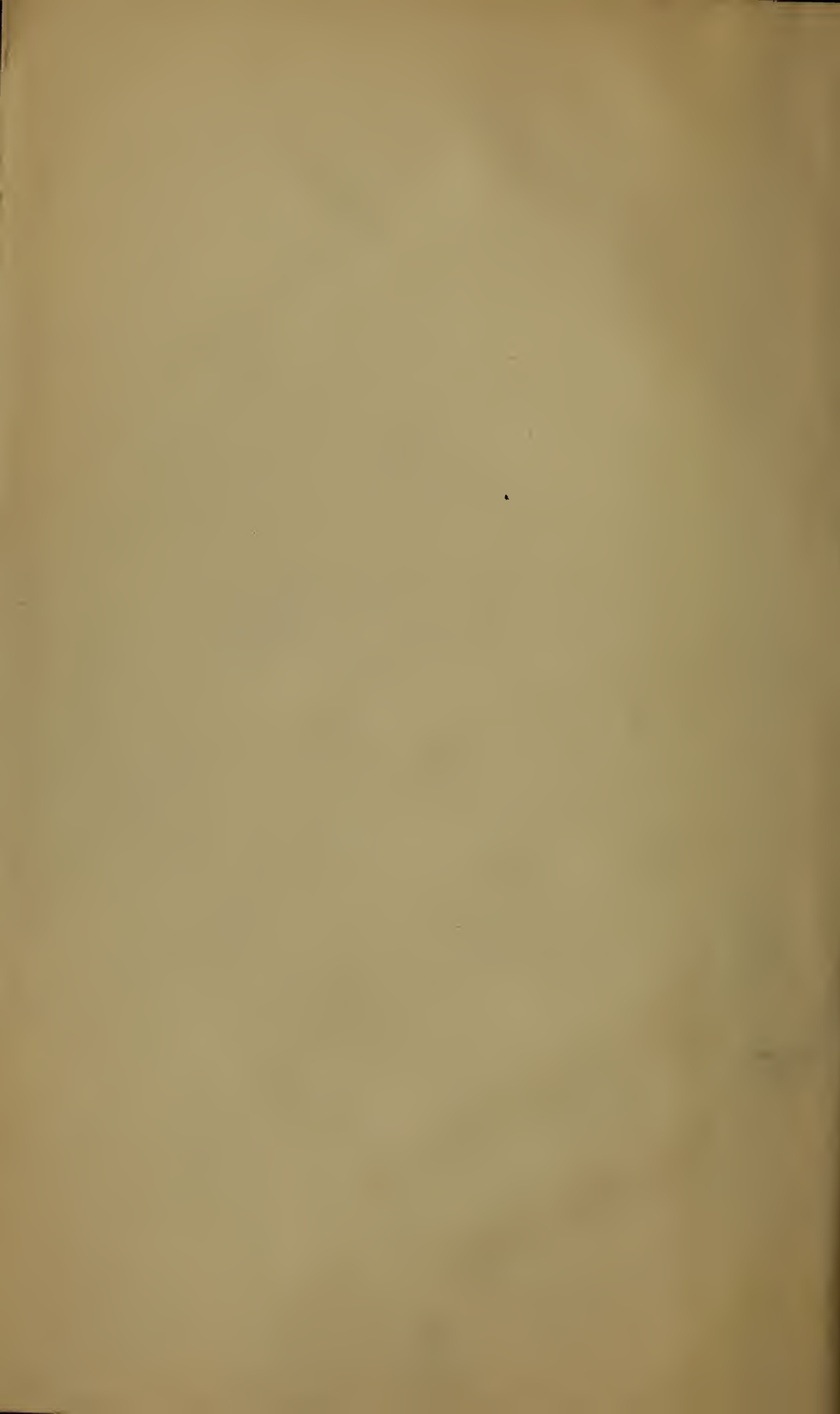


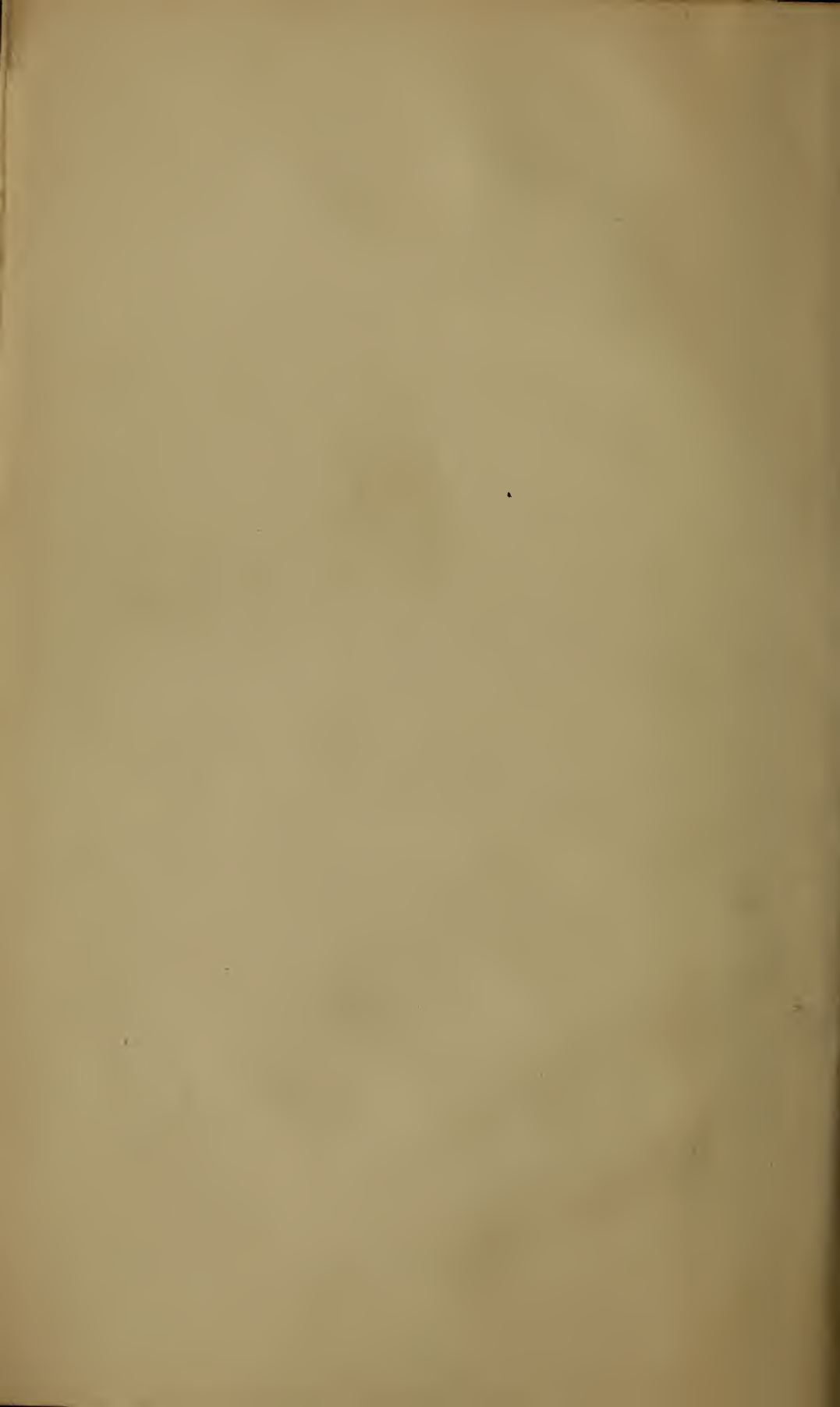
THE BAPTIST IN HISTORY











THE
BAPTIST IN HISTORY.

FIVE LECTURES


BY
Roswell Curtis
REV. R. C. MOSHER, A. M.,
"

PASTOR FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,

Albert Lea, Minn.

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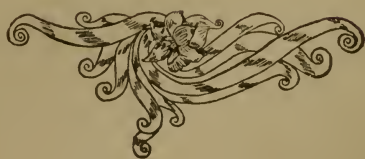
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INTRODUCTORY.

The origin of these lectures was as follows: It was years ago, while reading Baptist history, that there came to me, like a revelation, a vivid sense of the grand achievements of our spiritual ancestors and the vital necessity to Christendom at large of the preservation and enforcement of the principles which they held and which we hold. It seemed to me also that there ought to be more of a systematic teaching of these principles and a setting forth of our history so as to show what reason we have for self respect in view of the past and for steadfast loyalty in view of the future. Such study of our history as has been possible since that time has only confirmed my former convictions. In other churches there is no hesitancy in teaching denominational loyalty, but among us it is mostly left to the self evidence of the truths we teach, and it is no exaggeration to say that scarcely one in a hundred of our church members realizes either the importance of our principles, our present power, or our past attainments. I resolved at the time referred to that, if I should ever be pastor of another church, that church should have a course of addresses along these lines. Twice was this course of lectures attempted, but a period of physical prostration prevented their com-

pletion. The third attempt was successful to the extent which may be shown in the following pages. My effort has been not to present a full view of Baptist history, but only to gather up and present facts in such a way that all Baptists "to whom these presents may come" may feel that they may stand a little straighter because of a better self respect as Baptists, and must be a little more loyal to those principles which thus far have been the preservation of christianity from corruption and failure, and which shall hereafter lead to a purer church, a mightier spiritual force, and a speedier coming of the kingdom of our Lord Christ.

These lectures make no large claim to originality, except in the plan and manner of presentation, and there is not much in them which could not be found, probably, in some other book; but inasmuch as few have opportunity to examine many books, this summary may be useful. It should be said also, that although much has been published of late upon Baptist principles and history, nothing has yet appeared which presents the subject in the same way or with the same purpose as these lectures. They are now published as they were delivered, except that in a few parts they have been made more full than was possible in the time allotted to a public address. The interest shown by those who have listened to them has encouraged the hope that they may be more widely useful by their publication. To our host of Baptist young people especially they are now presented.

R. C. M.

*"Ye call me, Master, and, Lord: and ye say well;
for so I am."*

*"If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do
them."*

*"I testify unto every man that heareth the words
of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall
add unto them, God shall add unto him the plagues
that are written in this book; and if any man
shall take away from the words of the book of this
prophecy, God shall take away his part from the
tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are
written in this book."*

I.

THE DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLE OF BAPTISTS.

In these addresses we shall attempt an answer to the following questions:—First, What is a Baptist? then, Where in the records of the past do we find Baptists? next, What has it cost them to be Baptists? and finally, What did they do for civil liberty? and what have they done for the religious life of other bodies? The full answer to these questions would fill volumes; nay, the full answer can never be written, for the greater part of the record of their faith, their heroism, their endurance, their triumphs, and their weaknesses and failures, has perished from the earth; but we hope so much of an answer may be given as will inspire us to a loftier faith and a stronger fidelity to the truth of the Gospel, and to greater emulation of the heroism of the past.

Let it be understood throughout the whole of this discussion, that while we speak only of Baptists, there are and have been other and smaller bodies which have shared in our beliefs and principles, and sometimes suffered for them, although we cannot stop in our dis-

cussion to give proper credit to each by name. There are and have been many who, though not known by that name, should nevertheless be included under the broad definition of a Baptist. As far, therefore, as these other bodies have been in accord with us in the maintenance of these principles, what shall be said applies also to them.

There are some questions which, apparently, do not seem to most people to be of much practical moment in christian life, and yet they are really fundamental to it. They are like the substructures of a mighty bridge, down out of sight and not well understood, and indeed, scarcely thought of by the thousands who pass over it, and yet upon them the whole structure rests, and without them it would not stand at all. You all know that in the erection of any great building the utmost pains is taken to secure a good foundation. A few years ago, in the capital city of this state, a great twelve story printing house was built. The land on which it stands was originally a swampy place, called in the West a "slew" (slough), but had been filled in and so changed that the city dwellers of my day would never have guessed what was the original appearance of the ground. But in digging out for the basement, it was found that the foundation must be begun in the soft clay mud of what had been a swamp, and to those who watched the progress of affairs, it seemed impossible that any considerable building could ever stand on such a basis. However, the contractor went on with his work. He

dug out the mud to the depth of several feet, then he filled in the space with long piles driven down almost their whole length, putting them close together; then he made a mixture of concrete and filled the whole space with it to the top of the piles, so that when it set and became hard it would be almost like one great, solid stone. Still further, upon this concrete he placed great, broad stones, much broader than the thickness of the walls, upon these another layer of stones not quite so broad, and upon these still another, and then, and not until then, did he begin to build the walls of the structure. Many thousands of dollars spent before he began to build, but did the owners complain? Not at all; they knew the value of a good foundation.

Just so in spiritual building, and in building of churches as well as in building of individual character. The foundation principles are of the utmost importance, and to have them right should be the very first object, though with most individuals it is, in point of fact, the last. Not one in twenty (and perhaps it would be safe to say not one in fifty) of the members of churches can tell what is the real fundamental principle on which their own church is built, because not one in twenty makes any careful study of principles or comparison of methods, and so decides for himself before uniting with a church. They come in from all sorts of reasons; because their parents belong to that church; because they were brought up in that way; because their friends belong to that church or intend to join it; because that church has the best house of worship or the most social advantages; or because they like the minister, or from

some other such reason, but very seldom because they have read their bibles and examined the principles of church life and find that in that church the two best agree.

There are certain underlying principles which give tone and color and distinctive character to every religious body, and these different principles will work themselves out into different styles of activity and experience with unerring certainty. Each denomination of christians has its characteristic type which differs from all the rest, and this type is what it is because the fundamental principles of church life and organization are what they are. A Baptist christian is quite different from a Methodist christian, and the Methodist is different from the Presbyterian; a Disciple christian differs from either of them, and again a real christian in the Episcopal or Lutheran church differs from them all. A man who has had forty years experience and training in the Methodist ministry is a very different man in his thought, his bearing and his general air, his style of prayer and his religious experience, from a man who has had a like period of training and service in the Baptist ministry. One who has been familiar with the different denominations can tell without inquiry and with very considerable certainty, to what denomination a minister belongs, upon hearing him preach. Each of these, of course, thinks that his own particular type is the highest, but that cannot possibly be true. Some must be better and some worse.

But, moreover, the fundamental principles of church life are a matter of great importance, not only to the

church itself, but to society at large, for society and government are very profoundly influenced by the churches. Think, for instance, of the vast difference between social life in Roman Catholic and in Protestant countries, which is familiar to us all. But think further about this. If it were possible to have one nation filled with Methodist churches and admitting no other, another nation likewise filled with Baptist churches, another with Presbyterian, and another with Episcopal and still another with Roman Catholic, not only would these different nations, in the course of a few generations, develop different types of christianity, but also of social life and of government, where would be seen all the gradations from the absolute freedom and equality of a model republic in the Baptist nation to the despotism of an irresponsible monarchy, with its caste distinctions and divisions into privileged classes and tax paying classes in the Roman Catholic nation. We shall see by and by how profoundly the ruling idea of a church has influenced civil government.

There is, therefore, a better and a worse, a right and a wrong starting point, and it becomes a matter of the utmost importance that our foundation principles be right. It is, moreover, my profound conviction that the foundation principles of our Baptist churches are the right ones, and the more I study them the more I think so; and it is still further my conviction, just as profound, that we have a sacred obligation laid upon us to defend them and to teach them. If we believe that we hold truth which others do not, we are certainly bound to give it to them. Away then, with this false modesty

which lets others go on their way in error because we might be thought sectarian if we told them the truth. Why should so many of us be apparently anxious to persuade others of our own insignificance? And why should a Baptist be the only one among all the religious bodies

“Who scarcely dare, with a malicious frown,
Assert the nose upon his face his own”?

But let us note, first, that New Testament religion is not a matter of *feeling*, but of principle; a question of loyal obedience to Christ. We are not to judge of the “amount of religion” or of the piety we may possess by the frequency of states of blissful and ecstatic feeling, but by the readiness with which we obey the commands of Christ and the completeness of our submission to His will. Christ never said “Ye are my friends if ye *feel good*,” but “if ye *do* whatsoever I command you.” Love and sentiment and gush are not piety, although there is no true piety without love. Obedience to Christ is piety, and an ounce of obedience is worth more than a ton of gush.

Let us note again, the inconsistency of professed love and persistent disobedience. Jesus says, (Revised Version) “If ye love me ye will keep my commandments.” That was a hard question Jesus once asked of the Jews, “And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?” To this question they gave him no answer. Indeed, how could they give an answer? There was nothing they could say; not a word. Call him master and yet refuse to obey him! Call him Lord and yet deny his authority! The absurd-

ity and the sin of it is too plain to admit of any possible defence.

And let us note again, that a needless division among christians is a misfortune and a sin; and let us join heartily with those who cry out for christian unity, although we may differ radically from most of them as to the means by which it is to be secured. Jesus prayed for his disciples that they all might be one. Four times is that thought repeated in that one prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John, and in spite of all that may be said as to its advantages, I believe that the present division of christians into discordant and antagonistic sects is something which our Lord never contemplated and with which he is not well pleased. It is the product of insufficient intelligence and incomplete consecration. It was not so in the beginning and will not be so in the end, for we can not believe his prayer will go unanswered. There are not five New Jerusalems shown us in the Apocalypse nor forty, neither are there a dozen brides of the Lamb, and all at variance with each other, but only one. "That they all may be one, even as we are one" is the prayer of Jesus. That we may be one with each other, even as Jesus was one with the Father and as we claim to be one with Him; this is the ideal and *this ideal is to be*.

Whose sin is it then, this discord and division, and whence did it come? It did *not* come from those who follow the divinely appointed way and it will only cease when christians everywhere return to that way. But if needless division is a sin, then it is evident that a body of christians ought not to separate itself, or

remain separated, from others except for very serious cause. There must be some vital thing which they feel they must have, and yet cannot find in other bodies or churches. A denomination which has no distinctive principle—nothing which can not be found also to a good degree in some other denomination, has no sufficient reason for its existence. It is needlessly multiplying divisions. It should disband, and so make one less among conflicting names, and one less occasion of sneers to the scoffer. But we must take our own medicine. Can *we* show such a distinctive principle? Would any vital thing be lost if we should cease to exist? If not, then let us disband.

Now how many know whether anything would be lost or not? Probably our people are better posted as to the reasons for their beliefs and practices than those of many other churches, because we have always met so much scorn and opposition as to compel examination, yet among Baptists there is still a lamentable ignorance on these matters. Every Baptist pastor is obliged to meet it and the questions asked by his own members show that many vital things are not well understood, and this is much more true as to our history than as to our beliefs. Baptists themselves do not understand as they should their own position, their own strength, their own history, or the vital importance of their principles to the world at large. To the great majority of us an examination into these things would bring a most surprising revelation. We have never properly appreciated *ourselves*, and as to the opinion held of us by others—we know very well what that is. We know

what others think of us. There never was a people more misunderstood and misrepresented, and it is high time we ceased to be so timid about declaring our principles, and defending them.

In the minds of very many (and otherwise intelligent people too) the Baptists are a stubborn, narrow-minded set of people, exclusive, self-righteous and bigoted, who are forever harping about immersion and making it a hobby of more importance than anything else; who refuse to "commune" with anybody but themselves because they do not recognize anybody else as christians, or at least, as being as good as themselves, and so forth. It is all sufficiently familiar to us; we have heard it until we could almost say it backwards. It avails nothing to say in reply that Baptist requirements for the "communion" are exactly the same as those of every other church, namely, a christian experience, an orderly walk, and baptism, and that their baptism is only that which the best scholarship of the world declares to be the baptism of the New Testament, or that no one is more ready than they to fellowship christians of every name and no name in every labor of love, in prayer, in cordial sympathy, and even at the table of our Lord when his own requirements concerning it have been met. But it is not worth while to spend time in pointing out the utter untruthfulness of this conception. Those who believe these things are largely those who wish to believe them or those who have had no practical acquaintance with us. I must say, however, that many years' experience has convinced me that there is to be found among

Baptists fully as much of broad minded liberality and christian charity as among any christians on earth, and much more than among those who are foremost in denouncing our "bigotry" and "narrow-mindedness."

However, there must be something to these Baptist people, for see how they prosper and how they are coming up in every way in spite of the most strenuous opposition. They are more rigid in their discipline than other churches; it is a harder matter to get into their churches than into almost any other, and they refuse many whom others accept. They are unpopular everywhere and always have been, yet what a sweeping growth they have made and what a power they have attained to, and their growth, moreover, has always been just in proportion to the strictness with which they have held to their peculiar principles. They have grown in this country, from a half dozen poor, oppressed, outcast, and despised, to number more than four millions, and they have wealth and culture and learning of the highest rank. They have now (in the year 1899) more than forty-six million dollars invested in schools of learning, of which they have a hundred and seventy-nine, a larger amount than has any other denomination in America. In these schools are more than thirty-five thousand students. Their Foreign Mission Society expends more than six hundred thousand dollars annually and reports more converts from among the heathen than any other American missionary society. Taking the Baptists, Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians together for eight years past, the Baptists have, with less than one-fifth the total

expenditure of money, sustained nearly one-third the entire working force and have received more than one-third of all the converts. Their Home Mission Society expends more than half a million dollars annually. Their Publication Society has the finest and most complete printing establishment of any religious body in America, if not in the world, and one of the most complete of any kind, and also carries on extensive missionary operations in connection with its printing business; or rather, its printing business is the basis of its missionary operations, as its whole work is missionary. As to men, they can name a long list of those who take first place as scholars, educators, preachers, governors, statesmen, etc., among whom are many who are known the world over. There is among them no central authority as in other churches, whose influence might hold them together, but their organization is apparently a "rope of sand", and yet they are as harmonious a body as any. Divisions over creed questions and heresy trials that rack other denominations do not seem to trouble them at all. A "heretic", whether in high place or low, just seems to drop out by some natural process of elimination, and that is the last of him, while the church goes on just the same as before. Occasionally an individual does come to the front, with a great flourish of trumpets, declaring that the whole denomination is honey-combed by unbelief in the old doctrines; that the progressive spirits of to-day have altogether abandoned the standing ground of the fathers, and that the rising generation of ministers is full of unrest and dissatisfaction, unwilling any longer to have their minds fettered by old creeds

and longing for "a larger liberty"; that it only needs a leader to precipitate a universal stampede, and that the whole denominational edifice is about to collapse. And then this enterprising individual leads off, but there is no stampede; this uneasy brick comes out of the wall, but when, instead of the deafening crash of the whole falling denominational edifice, there is heard only a gentle *plunk*, it is discovered that only a single brick has fallen and as we look to see the hole it came from, lo, there is no hole there. Its place is already filled and the wall remains perfectly solid. And when the good brother himself thinks he heard something drop and looks around to see what it was, he finds "it's him." Now there must be some reason for all this, and if they have been made thus solid and vigorous because of their foundation principles, then let us study them.

Well, our distinctive principle *is* the explanation of it, though the declaration of that principle will create surprise in the minds of very many and call forth contradiction in the minds of not a few. It is simply this: **THE ABSOLUTE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST IN HIS CHURCH.**

Notice that we speak of a distinctive principle, not principles, for we have but one. All other things that may seem distinctive come directly from that. We insist that Jesus the Christ shall be king in his own kingdom, Lord in his own domain, with no rival claimant either in church authority, traditional practice, or individual opinion, to dispute his sway, nullify his commands, or change the things which He has appointed. "Whatsoever He saith unto you, *do it*," and

do it without question or delay. "Ye call me Master, and, Lord; and ye say well; for so I am." We deny to the church any authority whatever to legislate in matters pertaining to the kingdom. Her place is to follow and obey. In this position we stand alone; it is, therefore, our distinctive principle. This may seem like a sweeping statement and like a condemnation of everybody but ourselves; but the question is not whether it is sweeping or whether it is condemning, but whether it is true.

Furthermore, we regard the New Testament as a perfect and *complete* revelation of the will of Christ in all necessary things and to be, therefore, implicitly obeyed. If we may deviate in one point we may in another, and the principle of obedience to Christ is lost. It is the worst possible training for a convert, to teach him in reference to baptism or anything else, that "it makes no difference" whether he does what he thinks Jesus wants him to do or some other thing. We have seen many a convert ruined in the beginning by some older person telling him that "it makes no difference." It cuts the nerve of his christian life and often in the end destroys it altogether; for human depravity is such that he will be all too apt to follow out for himself the logic of this teaching. He will say, consciously or unconsciously, "If I am not bound to obey Christ in this matter why should I be in that, and in that, and again in that?" until he is really held to nothing and "his own sweet will" becomes his only rule of action. We are no more bound to obedience in repentance and faith than we are in baptism and church order, and if I can

break one of the Lord's commands with impunity, I can safely break them all.

Again, we believe that the Word of God was written for men, for all men, and not for ministers and priests only, and that every man, woman and child is at full liberty and under solemn obligation to read it and to interpret it, each for himself. The word of God is plain enough, so that any one who really wants to know what the will of God is can find out with but little trouble, and it will be no excuse for misbelief or misconduct that we have followed the interpretation of another, no matter how great a personage that other may have been.

It is sometimes said that Doctor So and So teaches this or that, and "he is a great deal smarter than you or I," and therefore must know what it is right to do; but our reply to that should be that there is such a thing as being too "smart," and that when one gets to the point where he knows more about what is commanded than Jesus himself, who gave the command, he is altogether too "smart" for us to follow with safety.

And here, by the way, we have come upon the reason of our so substantial unity. We are united because we all believe the same thing, and believe it too, not because some one told us we must, but because we found it in the Word of God and in our heart of hearts accept it as the truth of God; and this is the only substantial basis of christian unity. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" or can you fully separate them if they are agreed? Close proximity is not unity. The intimate association of people of discordant views and conflicting wishes is not harmony, as is

shown sometimes in political conventions; neither can distance separate those whose hopes, whose fears, whose aims are one, whose convictions of truth are identical, and the ground of whose convictions is the sure word of God. Put the breadth of the earth between them and they are still in harmony with each other and no force can really separate them. That is the reason that this "rope of sand" has proven so strong. It is the strongest possible bond. And this, too, is the only possible basis of christian unity. Let churches and christians everywhere throw away their human traditions, rules and creeds, and come at once to the inspired Word of God, and the present discord and division will presently cease.

We have, therefore, no confession, discipline, catechism or creed, save a simple statement of what we believe the Bible to teach on some main points, and that was first published for the information of outsiders and to save ourselves from being misunderstood, and is still used as a convenient summary of our belief, but not as a church standard to which all must subscribe. To us, councils and synods and church fathers were only human and uninspired, and we base no article of our faith upon their findings. We are just as infallible as they, and indeed more so, for we have much light which they did not have and a better knowledge of the Word of God than was possible to them. The opinions of the Very Reverend Theophrastus Nonesuch, D. D., LL. D., have for us no authority and his threats no terror. "The teachings of the church" is an expression we never use, a sentiment we repudiate, and "the

authority of Doctor So and So" is to us an absurdity. "To the Law and to the Testimony; if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."

We stand at one end of a logical line, the Roman Catholic church is at the other, and all other churches are between the two, although some are nearer to us and some are nearer to them. We regard the Bible as supreme authority and admit only what it requires; they regard the church as supreme authority and admit what they please. Either position is consistent with itself, although one or the other must be wrong. But all other churches are between the two, and in a position consequently, which is neither logical nor consistent. Moreover, they differ much among themselves. Some have more Bible and less church and some have more church and less Bible, but among these there can never be agreement, for who shall arise with authority to declare just what proportion of each makes the right mixture? The attempts at christian union which have been made within the last few years are quite instructive on this point. To be consistent, one must go to one extreme or the other. As a Catholic priest once said to one of our pastors, "In the end they must either come over to us or else go over to you."

But now, this is a bold stand to take, and we may properly be expected to furnish proofs. We think that a candid investigation into facts will reveal sufficient proofs, and we cordially invite the fullest investigation. Let us indicate some of the proofs.

We mention first, the organization of our churches,

their ordinances, doctrines and life. They will be found to be patterned exclusively after the New Testament model. We have no doctrines or ordinances that are not clearly taught in the New Testament, and we follow those ordinances and doctrines without expanding, curtailing or changing them. We do not believe in "developing" a practice until it becomes just the opposite of what it was intended to be, as has been the case with both the ordinances; the one having been "developed" (to borrow a word from Dean Stanley) from a simple memorial by the believer of the sufferings of his Lord into a mysterious and miraculous sacrament, by partaking of which one may be helped to become a believer, or have some mysterious spiritual grace ministered to his soul; and the other, from a symbol of the death of the believer with Christ and his resurrection to a newness of life, the sign of a regeneration already accomplished, to a rite by which the infant, incapable of faith or regenerating grace, becomes "regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church" as is declared in the Episcopal formula for the baptism of infants. It is our constant challenge thrown out to all the world to show us anything in our practice or belief which does not come directly from the New Testament; or to show us anything in the New Testament which we have left out.

We mention next our standard of discipline, which is the Bible alone. That is to say, in every so-called "heresy" trial, or in any delinquency of morals the reference is always directly to the Word of God. If a moral delinquency is involved, the charge is always that

of immoral or unchristian conduct, and if "heresy," it is always that of unscriptural teaching. The specification is not that this is "contrary to article so and so of our articles of faith," or to "page so and so of our book of discipline," but that it is contrary to the teachings of the Scriptures, and by this standard is the matter settled.

We mention again, the position always taken by a Baptist in any matter of controversy concerning religion. His appeal is always directly to the Bible. He may know little and certainly cares less what the commentators and church fathers have said about it, unless it be some matter of history or of fact which is to be settled by evidence outside of the Bible; neither does he quote the authority of some great man, living or dead, to substantiate his position. He has been taught to refer all religious questions directly to the Bible for solution and accept its voice as final.

Again, we mention the advice always given to young converts when they ask for information on such matters as baptism and church membership, which is simply that they should read the New Testament on those points. It is the old question of Christ to that other young man who was seeking spiritual guidance, "How readest thou?" This is so well known that it is sometimes called a Baptist trick. There are no others who *dare* to put the New Testament into the hands of their converts and tell them this: "Now read that book carefully, candidly, prayerfully; then follow it. Listen to the voice of no man, no church, no book but that, and then go where it leads you, do the things therein laid

down and unite with that church which seems to you to be the most like the one therein described." Other denominations dare not tell their converts this, for they know too well where they would go. It is too often their effort to persuade the young convert that he need *not* do the things therein laid down, and that he may follow men and books that teach things which are at variance with this book.

A story from out West illustrates this so well that I may be pardoned for repeating it. A missionary, who was not a Baptist, found an Indian out there who could read and gave him a Testament. After several weeks the Indian came to him declaring his belief in Christ and asking for baptism. The missionary questioned him, and finding that he was indeed converted, consented to baptize him. He therefore procured a bowl of water and was about to proceed when the Indian asked him what he was going to do with that. He replied that he was going to baptize him. "Ugh! no big enough" said he, "take Indian to river." The missionary then proceeded to explain that "that isn't the way we do," that "the amount of water isn't essential," that the great majority of christians do not baptize in that way," and that it "made no difference if only his conscience were satisfied," &c, &c. The Indian listened patiently until he had finished, and then handed him back the Testament with the remark, "*You give Indian wrong book then; me read um all through.*"

But some one will say: "Do you mean to say that you are the only ones who receive the Bible as the Word of God!" O no, not by any means. No, indeed! What I

mean to say is that we are the only ones who receive as authoritative *nothing but* the Bible. We receive the Bible and the *Bible only*; others receive the Bible and *something else*, and it is just exactly that something else that makes all the mischief. It is that something else that has made all the corruption in church life, all the discord of to-day, and all the persecutions and atrocities of the days past. It was that something else that made the awful history of the Roman Catholic church and brought upon Europe the dark ages. It is that something else that makes all the false christianity of to-day with its resulting scepticism and infidelity. It is that something else that is eating the life out of great christian churches and keeping them from being the strong spiritual forces they ought to be. Therefore we are afraid of it and will have none of it. What is in the book we are sure of, but what is not in the book—we do not know what it may lead to. We dare not take the risk; we will stick to the book. Why do we not have the things that others have, then? They are not in the book. Why no presiding elders or ruling elders? It is not in the book. Why no bishops, or baptism of babes, or consecration of altars, or vestments, or candles, or prayers for the dead, or any one of a hundred things that others have? They are not in the book, and that is the end of it.

We mention as a further proof, the historical genesis of our churches as compared with that of others. They are not the product of the thinking of any uninspired man, but are built on the model of the New Testament. Luther in the progress of the Reformation found it

necessary to establish a new church, and the Lutheran church of to-day is the result of his efforts at church building. He sought to throw off the Romish yoke and Romish corruptions; to make the gospel free to rich and poor alike and to bring the church back, in short, to what he considered to have been the true catholic standard before Romish corruptions crept in. The church in his mind was never anything but a universal organization under the protection of and co-extensive with the state; and Lutherans are the followers of Luther and his ideas. Calvin sought for a form of church government which should be strong and effective and yet Protestant. His plan was wrought out by a commission of six men appointed by the city government of Geneva and was modeled upon that government. Out of that Genevan church grew the whole Presbyterian system, with some necessary modifications and so the Presbyterian church is what it is, in its form, because the government of Geneva was what it was. Their claim of Apostolic origin and precedent is without foundation. Wesley did not at first intend to form any new church, but only to infuse new piety into the old church, and he himself lived and died in the Church of England; and so it came to pass that the founder of Methodism was himself never a Methodist. His aim was to work a reformation in the Established Church, but it resulted in forming a new church. And so every one of these churches, as well as almost every other existing church, can be traced as an historical movement back to some one man whose life and influence was its beginning. And these men, moreover, built

mostly upon models of their own, not supposing, apparently, that the Lord himself had given any pattern of a church; it seems never to have occurred to them to search the New Testament for the model of a church organization. Having been always accustomed to ecclesiastical and episcopal or hierarchical forms, they did not think of anything different.

But Baptist churches had no founder save the Founder of christianity itself. They have had leaders, but no man ever stood to Baptist churches in the relation of Luther to the Lutheran, Calvin to the Presbyterian, or Wesley to the Methodist church. Their origin was different. The churches of the Apostles' day were such as are now called Baptist. They disappeared amid the corruptions of the early centuries. They sprang up again before the Reformation in scattered congregations here and there with different leaders and somewhat different practices. Becoming numerous, they again almost disappear before the fiery deluge of persecution by Catholic and Protestant alike. But again they re-appear in a company here and there who have read their Bibles and can not be satisfied with any of the forms of church life which they see around them, and from this point on they grow and multiply. Baptist churches are the result of a spontaneous gathering together of people of the same mind, actuated by Bible principles, but established by no man as their founder.

This spontaneous origin is well illustrated by the history of the first modern Baptist churches in Germany, organized by Dr. J. G. Oncken in 1834 and onwards,

by the history of the African Native Church, as given in the Baptist Missionary Magazine for December, 1899, and especially by the first Baptist church organized in the Island of Cuba, which was gathered by Dr. Alberto Diaz. This body of believers were desirous of forming a church organization yet could not adopt that of the churches by which they were surrounded, or of which they had knowledge. They therefore betook themselves to a prayerful study of the New Testament to see if they could find the pattern of a church therein. As a result of such study they agreed upon a simple organization, electing a pastor and deacons and adopting the ordinances as they are given in the New Testament, without knowing that they were forming a Baptist church and were afterwards much surprised and delighted to find that they were in entire accord and fellowship with a great body of christians in America and England called Baptists. The Cuban brethren had been organized into a Baptist church two years before they knew that they were Baptists. It is worth something to hear Dr. Diaz tell the story of their origin.

Now, in contrasting the simplicity of Baptist organization with that of other churches, the question is irresistibly suggested, have any of these things in which they differ from us been an improvement? Are they any stronger, any more harmonious, any more spiritual, any more efficient than we by reason of these things? Does their baptism of unconscious babes add anything to their strength? Is the wearing of gowns and the burning of candles any aid to the effective preaching of the gospel? Are bishops and presiding

elders any aid to an independent manliness in the ministry? Does the following of church tradition rather than New Testament teaching deepen the spirituality of their members? Is the wisdom of synods and conferences and the laws of catechisms and books of discipline a better guide than the written Word and the independent leading of the Holy Spirit? Are they better off with these things or are we better off without them? To us this is simply to ask whether man's way is wiser than God's way; to ask if the Holy Spirit did or did not really know what was best for all times and all places; and if he really did direct the Apostles in their establishing the visible forms of church life as well as in teaching them the truths of repentance, faith and sanctification. The question, it seems to us, needs no answer.

The problem of the Baptist is, therefore, very simple. Jesus and his Apostles preached that men should trust in the Christ for their salvation; so therefore do we. When men trusted, then they baptized them, and what they did in baptizing them is very plain; they led them down into the water, they immersed them in the water, into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, they led them up out of the water, and that was the only "way of baptizing" they had. The modern way has been introduced without authority and retained without blessing. Then the believers, (who had been baptized, every one of them), commemorated the Lord's suffering in the "Lord's Supper", and these were their only ordinances; all this therefore we do also. Furthermore we find that these baptized believers were gathered

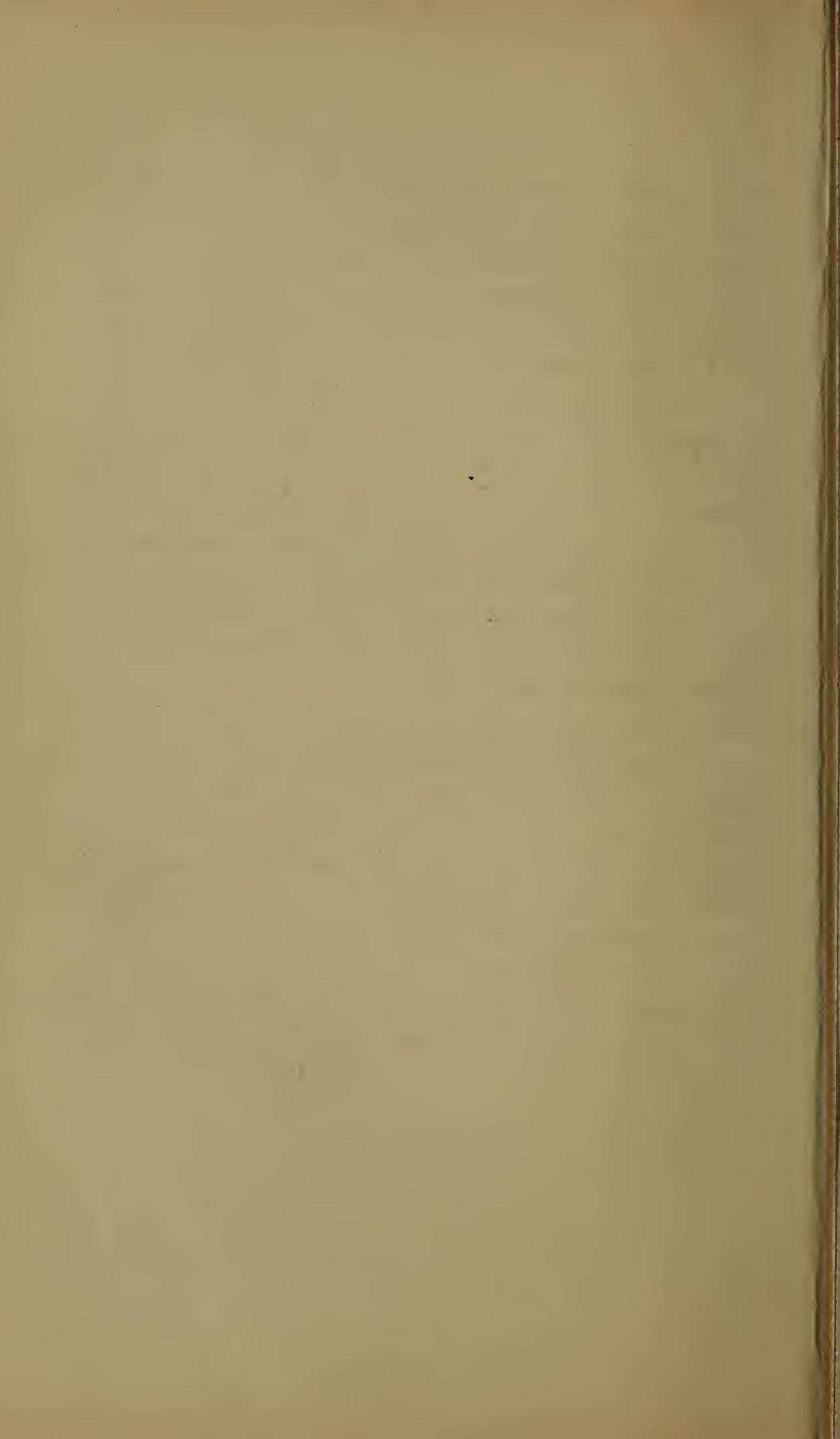
into bodies called churches, each with a pastor, or pastors, and deacons as their only officers, and that every church conducted its own affairs. Thus, therefore, we form our churches. Then we find that they were taught to live godly in Christ Jesus, and this is all; all there is of it.

All this, thus far, has come directly out of our distinctive principle as stated, namely: that Christ shall be supreme in his own church and that we shall simply do what he requires. You will readily see that there are involved in this the following things, each of which is a cardinal doctrine of Baptist faith, and has been largely accepted by others also, namely: a spiritual church membership, that is, a membership made up of converted persons only, those who are actually born again; the baptism of believers only, and that baptism immersion; the Lord's supper for the baptized only; the freedom of every one to interpret the Bible for himself; the entire separation of church and state as occupying two distinct spheres; each church independent of every other; the equal right of every one in the church to a voice in its affairs; and the Word of God overshadowing and dominating all. This combination makes a Baptist church, and it is found in no other.

Now, "If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye *do them*." When the will of Christ has been expressed in all these matters, are we under no obligation to regard that will? They tell us that "there are Christians in all the churches," which is very true, as we are glad to know, but has nothing whatever to do with the case. They tell us "it is of no consequence," just as if anything

that our Lord commands could be of no consequence. They tell us that it "makes no difference as long as our consciences are satisfied." But that would have justified Saul of Tarsus in his fierce hatred of the first christians, or the King of Moab in offering up his own son as a burnt offering, or the modern votary in the senseless mummeries of the Papal church. To us it does make a difference. When we consider the obligation of obediently following our Lord, it does make a difference. When we see the fearful consequences of admitting the traditions of men, it does make a difference. When we consider that the tendency of men is always toward sin and that the danger is always that we shall drift away from Christ, it does make a difference, and we dare not depart from the Word.

Then let others depart if they must and will; let them reject what is commanded and adopt what is not commanded if they are bound so to do, and reap the inevitable fruit of it. Let them dispute and distress themselves if they must, over questions of human creeds and matters of man's invention; as for us, the way is easy and plain, for we "hear a voice behind us, saying: This is the way, walk ye in it." So have we ever aimed to do, so are we determined now to do, and that so we may ever do, help us Almighty God.



"Lift up thine eyes round about and behold: All these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all as with an ornament, and gird thyself with them, like a bride. For, as for thy waste and thy desolate places and the land that hath been destroyed, surely now shalt thou be too strait for the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. The children of thy bereavement shall yet say in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary, an exile, and wandering to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold I was left alone: these, where were they?"

II.

THE HISTORY OF BAPTISTS.

Having described the Baptist, the question now to be answered is, Where in the records of the past do we find him? We cannot, however, attempt to give even a full outline of Baptist history for it is too long a tale. To give the story of eighteen centuries in an hour's discourse is altogether too large a task. Let me give only the merest sketch, together with some necessary cautions concerning it.

I. We need to keep in mind from the beginning that Baptist history is not to be written upon the same plan as any other church history, for the reason that Baptist churches are not like any other church. It is not the history of an organization which can be traced from a definite beginning by definite steps to its present condition, neither is it the tracing of a name which has had at all times a definite meaning; for the name is comparatively modern and has been applied on the one hand to those who were not Baptists, and on the other hand, many who were really such were not known by that name. It is the tracing of a *principle* which has been

held by various bodies, sometimes with completeness and sometimes not, and sometimes in close association with other like bodies and sometimes by those who were isolated and widely scattered.

The history of Presbyterianism, for example, is the history of a definite form of church government, always visible and easily traced, an organization beginning at a definite time and place, the origin and developement of which is fully recorded, and all the parts of which have an historical connection with all the rest. The same may be said of Episcopacy, Methodism, or Lutheranism, as well as of smaller bodies, but it can not be said at all of us. These churches have come down to us like a lengthening chain, every link fast welded into the preceeding link, but Baptist churches are more like a load of bricks which have been picked up along the way, all alike because made in the same mold but each complete in itself and independent of all the rest.

The effort to make out a Baptist succession is a failure. That is, to find a succession of churches, each descending from the preceding and reaching back to the days of the Apostles, so that a continuous line of them can be affirmed to have existed from that time to this. Bearing in mind that in the early days few records were made, and the wholesale destruction of those that were made, it seems to me that to deny positively the existence of such a succession is going too far; but to assert it positively is to assert what can not be proved. The records of primitive times are very meager, and later persecutions were abundant, so that for generations Baptist movements were made mostly in secret and

nothing was committed to paper which might betray them, and as has already been said, a full history of them can never be written; yet there are facts which seem to imply that the Baptist principle was much more extensively and tenaciously held and consistently carried out in those obscure periods than is generally supposed. There are enticing hints and suggestions of possibilities which one longs to follow out, but the materials are wanting. It is certain that there was a succession of christian bodies, known under different names and stretching down from the Apostles' day to this, who kept alive the truth of the gospel in its essential purity. They bore strong resemblance to those who were afterwards called by our name and emphasized now this and now that fundamental article of our faith; but we cannot find in them, at this late day and with the incompleteness of their record, a complete harmony with our beliefs. The stream of pure truth continued to flow, taking the name of now this and now that able leader and gospel worker. They were always persecuted and always therefore, in obscurity. If quiet and opportunity had been given to them to organize and develop a formal life, doubtless they would have shown a close likeness to the New Testament pattern. All we can say is that we cannot clearly trace this pattern from the beginning in the records that are now left to us. There *may* have been a Baptist succession but no man can now prove it; and it is but fair to say that the more investigation brings to light new facts, the less likely it seems that such succession in the strict sense can be found.

But we do not depend for our authority upon an ecclesiastical pedigree, nor upon grace that seems to reside in the clothes, being put on and off with priestly garments, but upon the authority of the Word of God and upon grace that is ministered directly to the believing soul, the Holy Spirit making valid that which is done in his name and for his glory independently of ordaining hands and priestly vestments. He is in the true apostolic succession who has the apostolic spirit and teaches apostolic principles and truths, and that is an apostolic church which is built upon the New Testament model, even though it have had no predecessor for a thousand years. Indeed, the church that can trace its history back through visible organizations to the days of the Apostles proves thereby that it is *not* an apostolic church; for these visible organizations have been full of apostacy, unspirituality, false doctrine and all uncleanness. And why need any one be anxious to claim an apostolic succession that must needs run back through such monsters of iniquity as Pope Alexander VI, or such a murderer of heretics as Innocent III, or even such a political schemer as Gregory VII, or one of such grasping ambition as Gregory the Great? Rather let us glory that our spiritual ancestors were too pure and true to be the companions of such as these, and were among those who by reason of their real godliness were driven into the wilderness.

And right here I wish to protest most emphatically against the misnaming of much that is called church history, and insist that it is not the history of the church of Christ at all. For a thousand years it is the history

of a corrupt, oppressive, and sometimes unspeakably vile religio-political organization, which never had for its real aim the teaching of the true principles of Christ's gospel and the uplifting and saving of men's souls. It is the history of a hierarchy oppressing and deluding the people, of the teaching of superstition continually made worse and worse, of liberty destroyed, of ignorance made more dense, of tyranny both civil and spiritual made more tyrannical, and a blasphemous usurpation by men of prerogatives that belong only to God. To call this "church" history is surely keen sarcasm, careless handling of names, or utter ignorance. Let it be frankly admitted that in this organization were many holy men at various times and that out of it have come men whose names will be glorious for all time, yet it remains true that they did not shape its policy nor control its course, and that they themselves were much blinded and hindered in their struggles for purity and usefulness by its influence. The real church history is to be found in the largely unrecorded struggles of those who never recognized this institution, and the heroes of the church are to be found in the appalling list of those who suffered from its fury.

Yet, even if there be no Baptist succession in the sense of a lineal descent of churches, it is quite possible that there never was a time when there were not somewhere Baptist churches; not exact counterparts of those of to-day, but in all essential principles the same. When they failed in one place they had sprung up in another, and so the various movements overlap each other in point of time, though widely separated in

point of locality and not, as far as can be discovered, vitally connected with each other.

II. It is supposed by many that Baptists have no history; that they are a modern sect founded by Roger Williams, or perhaps originating in England about the year 1600 with one Smythe who is said to have baptized himself, or at the farthest running back to the fanatical so-called Anabaptists of Munster. But this is an entire mistake. They are really the most venerable body of christians, as to age, in existence, for their continuous traceable history runs back for centuries beyond that of any other existing church, (except the Roman Catholic, and that is not in any proper sense a church), and in their detached and independent history they run back to the very beginnings of churches. In the face of so much glorifying of antiquity and vaunting of the history of other bodies, let me say it again, that the Baptists are several hundred years older than any other existing christian body. There were thousands of Baptist churches before ever there was an Episcopal, a Lutheran, a Congregational, a Methodist, or a Presbyterian church. Not that we are any the purer or more spiritual today for that, but if antiquity is the test of respectability, let us understand that we can be very respectable. And more than that, their leaders, for breadth of mind, clearness of insight, and purity of life, have been second to none; their principles have been broader, their aims truer, and their final achievements grander than any. While others have been hampered by narrow views or selfish considerations, they have wrought for all men and for all times, and in

the great struggle for human right and human liberty they have led the van which others have followed and have been in the fore front of that conflict of which others have enjoyed the results.

Compare this with other movements. The Presbyterian movement has perhaps been as wide in its development and influence as any other modern religious movement, but it carried within itself the seeds of oligarchy, developing into narrow intolerance when it gained the predominance, and as a religious force, seeking intellectual rather than spiritual power, culture rather than conversion, and so seeking flowers from a seed not yet planted, the culture of a plant not yet produced. The Methodist movement was a revival of religious force and was greatly useful in emphasizing the value of practical godliness, preaching the doctrines of repentance with great power; but it came comparatively late in the day, it was monarchical in form and spirit and it has largely lost its primitive force and power by the working out of principles within itself. It is strong in numbers and as an aggressive organization but weakened and weakening in its genuine spiritual force. Congregationalism has never developed such a force and power as other movements have and its influence has been mostly confined to England and America. It is a striking fact that while it was the first church to be well established in America, it now numbers only about 630,000, while the Presbyterians number one and a half millions, the Baptists more than four millions and the Methodists of various sorts more than five millions. Episcopacy simply meant a division

of the Papacy and the formation of an independent and reformed wing of it into a separate church. Lutheranism was a reformation of the Papacy and has resulted in a system which, practically, is but little nearer the saving gospel truth than is the Papacy itself, although not by any means so gross in its doctrines and influence.

Each of these was, in itself and in its time, a grand movement and a great advance upon what had gone before it, and it is not at all my purpose to belittle them, but only to say that Baptists have wrought for a grander principle and have toiled in a more universal struggle than they all. They have contended for the complete supremacy of Christ over all men and all things in his church; for a spiritual church which should be a spiritual power; for the absolute right of every man to absolute liberty of conscience in all things, and for freedom for him, not only from outside oppression but from domination even by his own church. These may seem like idle words of denominational glorification but they are not so intended; they are the result of long thought and study upon the fundamental principles of church life and their practical working out, as seen not only in the history, but also in the every day life and work of the various religious bodies around us. They are the statement of a deliberate judgment of the facts. While others glorify themselves and thank God because they are this or that, let me speak out my honest convictions and say that I am proud of my spiritual ancestry, that as I read their history I am thrilled by their deeds, and that I am more than ever determined to stand by their principles.

III. A word needs to be said also about the misrepresentations of our history, although it is a topic we might well wish to omit, and it requires some grace to speak of it calmly. What a mess of stuff indeed, has the world received for Baptist history, and for how long! It is but within comparatively few years that the truth has become known, and not yet with any fulness. There is a plain reason for this misrepresentation; the truth is hard to get at and those who have written have not cared to take the trouble to get at it. The works of our Baptist authors, except the more modern ones, have perished, and we have for our guidance for the most part only the story of their enemies. Even in the works of such great historians as Mosheim there is evident the spirit of bitterness and unfairness. The descriptions of their lives, beliefs and deeds were written by men who both could not and would not understand them; could not, because too narrow and unspiritual to understand them or their teachings, and would not because too bitter in their hatred and antagonism. Their history was written by the men who drowned them and tortured them and burned them, and did it because of a jealous hatred of them; and this is taken for Baptist history! Of how much credence is it worthy? Their own records are gone—burned with their bodies—and only hidden remnants remain. Their books were everywhere sought out and destroyed. No public library would receive and preserve them and what few copies were hidden and thus preserved perished in various ways. Of most of their works we know but the titles and these are preserved to us only in the

writings of their enemies. Their record is to be found only in stray notices here and there, in the records of the Inquisition, in the written files of courts of judgment where they were examined and condemned, in musty local registers, and in the attacks of their opposers; and to write their history and write it truly requires great patience, wide research and much study. Of how much value would be the history of the abolition of slavery written by some angry, disappointed slaveholder? or a history of Prohibition written by John Gund, or the editor of the "Wine and Spirit Gazette?" or a life of General Thomas J. Morgan, late United States Indian Commissioner, written by Monseigneur Satolli or "Father" Cleary the Catholic priest of Minneapolis, who has publicly called him a fool and a knave and a liar and several other not very pretty things? Would you expect an honest appreciation of motives or an unbiased judgment as to results from such writers as these? Hardly. Of how much value as American history would be a rehearsal of the lies and mud-slinging of successive political campaigns? Of just as much value as some of the representations of the Baptists.

Thus it is believed by many that they have always been an ignorant and bigoted people, and Baptists *because* they were ignorant and bigoted; that the early Baptists of our own country were men of no intelligence or power, and that all the intellectual force and broad-minded intelligence was in the other denominations; that the madmen of Munster were Baptists, and the characteristic type of Baptists of their day, and that their abominations of fanaticism, nakedness, polygamy

and riot were the result of Baptist teaching. Thomas Muntzer and Balthazer Hubmeyer are supposed to have been the leaders of these fanatics, the similarity of Munster and Muntzer perhaps, having confused the two. But Muntzer never was a Baptist. Although he held some doctrines similar to theirs he opposed them in more. He was sometimes a Lutheran and sometimes a Catholic and he had been dead for several years when these things happened. He did, indeed, deny the scripturalness of infant baptism, but continued to practice it to the day of his death. Hubmeyer never had any connection with the Munsterites either, for he likewise had been dead several years. The wildest excesses of Munster were due to Rothman, a Lutheran pastor. The strongest protest was made against these fanatics by the two hundred Baptists who dwelt there, until by their opposition one fourth of them lost their lives and the rest were driven from the city.* Likewise the principles and teachings of these fanatics were repudiated both before and after the Munster uproar, by the great majority of Anabaptists throughout Europe. Often in their examinations under arrest we read the question whether they were not the people who were engaged in these things and who, if they should come to power, would murder the rulers and revolutionize society, and always the reply that they were not of those people and that they considered their teaching and their doings wicked and wrong and not according to the teachings of the gospel.

The real cause of the Munster kingdom was this:—In the cruel oppression which they suffered, these

* Armitage, Hist. Bap. p. 375.

people saw no hope of relief from any earthly source, and believing themselves to be the people of God, and fired with the example of old Testament worthies, they turned to a belief in the interposition of heaven. The doctrine of the immediate coming of Christ to put down his enemies and exalt his people strongly appealed to their hope and their imagination. It needed only the fiery eloquence of misguided leaders, who misinterpreted prophecy, to persuade them to set up a heavenly kingdom in preparation for Christ's immediate coming, and the natural passions of men, which always come to the front in times of religious fanaticism, did the rest. The whole movement can be traced directly to the wrong teaching of certain leaders as to the nature of the kingdom of God and the immediate advent of Christ.

The peasants' war has also been laid at the door of the Anabaptists, but surely if ever a people had righteous cause for rebellion these peasants had, and in the beginning they were upheld by all the reformers, including Luther himself, although afterwards he reviled them and called for their butchery in terms most heartless and brutal. That they sympathized in this struggle for liberty is very true, as they have always sympathized in every such struggle, and that some of them were engaged in it is also true, and that it took on a semi-religious character; but it was occasioned by the cruelty and oppression of the lords and nobles and not by religious teaching. It was the struggle of a down trodden people for their natural rights, and a brutal struggle because they had been brutalized and degraded by their oppression.

The truth is, that every movement hostile to the ruling power and every one who by any difference of belief became obnoxious to the ruling church was dubbed indiscriminately "Anabaptist," so that the name came to include both those sober, pious folk who were really Baptists on the one hand, and the wildest, most visionary fanatics on the other, and the good suffered for the bad. The effect of the Munster uproar was to arouse such a hatred of everything that was called Anabaptist that their persecution was renewed with redoubled violence, and they were hunted to the death indiscriminately; and to this day Baptists are despised because of Munster. Professor Vedder says, "Many who were called by this title were never Anabaptists but practiced pedobaptism as consistently as any Lutheran or Romanist of them all." He further says: "The Anabaptists were denounced by their contemporaries, Romanist and Protestant alike, with a rhetoric so sulphurous that an evil odor has clung to the name ever since. If one were to believe half he reads about these heretics, he would be compelled to think them the most depraved of mankind. Nothing was too vile to be ascribed to them, nothing was too wicked to be believed about them, nothing in fact, was incredible except one had described them as God-fearing, pious folk, studious of the scriptures and obedient to the will of their Lord as that will was made known."*

Is it any wonder that one should boil over with indignation to find himself in sympathy with a people whom he admires, whose principles are also dear to him, who are his own spiritual ancestors, and to find them

* Short History, p. 86.

so traduced, misrepresented, belittled and despised by those who never had their nobility of character, and their achievements calmly appropriated by those who have no word of sympathy for their sufferings? But the truth of their history is beginning to appear and the world will at last do them justice.

IV. To trace the history of Baptists, we are to look for those who held to the supreme authority of the Bible and discarded the authority of "the church," to a spiritual church membership, the baptism of believers only, the absolute freedom of conscience, and therefore entire freedom from the control of the civil government in religious matters; in short, for those who believed what we believe and did what we do in all essential particulars.

First, then, it is not an assumption of bigotry but the statement of a simple fact to say that the apostolic churches were Baptist churches. It is not mere denominational buncomb to speak of the first organized church as "the First Baptist Church of Jerusalem," as is sometimes done by way of pleasantry, for if it were exactly reproduced in Jerusalem today it would certainly by common consent be called a Baptist church. It surely would not be called Methodist or Episcopal or Presbyterian. Certainly those first churches were immersed churches, and converted churches, and they had pastors and deacons as their only officers, and their government was democratic, and they had no other law than the will of Christ made known to them by the teaching of the Apostles, directly and by inspiration, which teaching, afterwards written down, became our

New Testament. They baptized no infants, they wore no gowns, they burned no candles, they worshipped no eucharist, they confessed to no priest, they held no synods for the government of the churches.

But these churches became gradually corrupted, and more rapidly than we would think possible. Those were days of ignorance, of strongly intrenched heathen notions on the one hand, and Jewish notions on the other. Foolish and conceited heathen philosophy sought to explain all things and it was inevitable that the churches should soon become corrupted by these things when the Apostles were dead. The only wonder is that christianity ever survived at all. It would have been different perhaps, if then as now general intelligence had been high and if every one had been able to have and read a printed Bible, and so by constant comparison with the recognized standard constantly to correct himself in his thought and his practice. But when the New Testament was written it was only to be found in single gospels and epistles here and there, and when gathered up in one volume was only reproduced by the manual labor of writing, and copies of it were so costly that the scriptures were not possessed by the majority of christians. In that case, people were mostly dependent on their pastors for their knowledge of the Bible and the interpretation of it. The weight of great names gave currency to wrong interpretations. Sad errors in regard to almost every important doctrine crept into the early church and men of influence gave them currency. We see what is the influence of prominent men in the spread of error in our enlightened days.

These leading men, too, were not free from worldly ambitions and very soon were contending with each other as to relative influence, which contentions finally crystallized into claims of authority. As the doctrines of the new birth and baptism were perverted, both churches and leaders grew less spiritual and more ambitious, less genuine and more formal, the contention for supremacy grew sharper, until finally a few, then two, and at last one gained recognition as chief; and so began and so grew up the Papacy.

But no corruption was ever fastened upon the churches without a protest from some pure minds and a struggle, and there were various attempts to preserve the primitive purity which resulted in bodies of various names and holding more or less of Baptist principles, but often less. Such were the Montanists, the Novatians, the Donatists, and many others of various names, of whom it has been claimed by some that they were Baptists altogether and by others that they were Baptists not at all. The truth lies between the two, but most of them held errors that set them outside the fellowship of Baptist churches. There is a gap of nearly a thousand years in the *traceable* Baptist succession on the continent of Europe, until we come to the Petrobrusians about the year 1125. Here, four hundred years before the Reformation, we come upon those who were clearly Baptists. During this period of a thousand years there are traces and probabilities or possibilities only of pure churches, but no definite record. That a primitive and pure christianity was preserved in central Europe all this time, hidden away in the forests and

mountains, is almost positively certain, but that it was in all respects Baptist we cannot show. This region was the rendezvous for the remnants of persecuted righteousness from many quarters, and as an abundant harvest presupposes a broad seed sowing, so the great crop of Anabaptists that sprang up all over central Europe just before and during the Reformation leads to the very strong presumption that there must have been many antecedent teachers and preachers of their doctrines of whom we know nothing. The truth is that all Christendom seems to have gone off, during this period, into such corruptions of life and doctrine as left little semblance of true christianity in it. The records of the early centuries are astounding in their revelations and if the primitive faith was anywhere preserved, it must have been in some out of the way place where current opinions and practices had little influence. Very much of christianity was only a baptized paganism, and the reports of the "conversion" of nations and the "baptism" of whole tribes at once show the spuriousness of it. About all there was of their "conversion" was their "baptism."

This gap is spanned according to a recent book, "The Ancient British and Irish Churches," by the work of "Saint" Patrick and his followers, whom the author makes out to be substantially Baptist. We might sincerely wish the claim made in this book could be verified but an impartial investigation shows that it is groundless. The early British and Irish history is very interesting and contains many names which are famous for missionary work. Among these are Patrick, Co-

lumba, Ninian, Kentigern, Columbanus, Caedmon, the first Anglo-Saxon poet, Aidan, and finally that long suffering young Irish woman, Brigit. The gospel seems to have been first preached in Great Britain about the year 63, or at least during the first century, but by whom we do not know. It has been credited in turn to Joseph of Arimathea, Simon Zelotes, Paul, Philip the Apostle, Peter, James the son of Zebedee, Aristobulus, and I do not know how many more, none of whom probably ever saw the country. It is more likely that some earnest trader or christian soldier first gave the gospel to the island. The one thing clear from the various traditions and also from subsequent history, is that the origin of British christianity was from the far East and not from Rome. There had been more than one mighty christian movement in Britain and Ireland before the first Romish emisaries were sent there, and the primitive character of its christianity is attested by the cool reception they met when they did come and by the struggle maintained for several hundred years before Rome gained full control. The gospel took a strong hold upon Britain and spread rapidly, and during the persecutions of the Roman emperors Britain furnished its martyrs and christian heroes in common with other lands, although less in number because more remote. Out of this vigorous British christianity was raised up the great apostle to Ireland, Patrick.

Patrick was a Briton whose father Calpurnius was a deacon, and he was born near Dumbarton, now in Scotland, probably about the year 360. Thus this early British christianity furnished an evangelist for Ireland,

which in turn evangelized much of Scotland and part of England and wrought a great work upon the continent. So, curiously enough, the great patron saint of all the Irish, the saint by whom every Irishman swears, (and he would swear harder yet if he knew it), was an Englishman. And still further, the Irish of his day were Scotchmen, being the original Scots, and the original Scotchmen were Irishmen, for they came from Ireland and conquered the native Picts, giving their name to the country now called Scotland. Again, Patrick has been sainted by the Roman Catholic church, but in all his life he never heard of it nor ever acknowledged any Pope; and indeed, the records call *him* "papa Patrick;" i. e. Pope Patrick. For a long time he and his work were ignored by the Papacy because he was not a Romanist, but finally all was claimed and Patrick himself canonized as a Romish Saint.

At the age of sixteen he was captured by a band of marauding Irish and for six years experienced the hardships of slavery, herding swine and exposed to all weathers. After his escape and return home he had a vision of a man from Ireland and heard a voice of the Irish people calling him to come and dwell with them, and after the most strenuous opposition from relatives and friends, about the year 396, (though some give the date as late as 430), he began to preach the gospel in Ireland. He was a man of apostolic zeal, untiring energy and magnetic power, brave, unselfish and loving. He aimed to give the gospel to the whole island and his wonderful success was such that a large part of the island was evangelized. There were a few christian

churches already established before his time, but in comparison with the work he did they receive but little attention. He is said to have erected seven hundred churches and ordained the same number of bishops; another account says three hundred and sixty-five churches; the facts of his life are not all clear and accounts differ. Twelve thousand are said to have been baptized at one time and other great baptisms are credited to him.

This was a truly missionary work, and the missionary spirit remained with it after Patrick's death. There grew up great schools or monasteries such as at Durrow, Bangor, Derry, and Iona, some of which were attended by as many as three thousand students at one time. In these monasteries teachers and preachers were trained, and from them Southern Scotland was evangelized and many missionaries were sent into England, France and Germany. By the middle of the eighth century these missionary churches were predominant throughout the whole Rhine valley and the entire South and West of Germany. As we look at the Ireland of our day, it does not seem possible that it should have been, and for centuries, the center of christian influence and missionary activity for all northern Europe, but so it was.

Now as to the practice and teaching of Patrick and his followers, it is not easy to get at the exact truth. He was not himself well educated and left but two short writings which have come down to us, one, his "confession" or self defense, and the other an "epistle to Caroticus," a marauding Welsh chief who had carried

off many of Patrick's "baptized christians." His only baptism was immersion, but that counts for nothing because no other was known in his day, sprinkling and pouring not having yet come into use except for sick people. He recognized three orders in the clergy, namely, deacons, presbyters and bishops, which last seem not to have been bishops in the New Testament sense of the term nor yet in the modern sense of it. His schools were of a monastic type and seem to have developed later into genuine monasteries. There is no trace of infant baptism but that delusion had not yet become general. He seems to have made everything of baptism after the fashion of those days, to the extent that baptism and conversion were practically the same. In his day baptism was christianity and christianity was baptism, and it was profoundly venerated as a holy mystery. Emphasis was laid on this rather than on the love of God to sinners and the necessity of a new birth. His wholesale baptisms look very suspicious. His method of work seems to have been to "convert" a chief and then "baptize" his whole tribe, or as many as would submit to the ordinance. The warlike character of these "christian" Irish shows the spuriousness of their conversion, for their history for centuries is the history of tribal jealousies, treacheries and massacres. Patrick seems to have had monks and "virgins" and after his day Ireland was full of them. There still exist plain proofs of hermit monks who lived in small cells from which they could see nothing but the sky and out of which they never came. *

The earliest accounts of Patrick extant were written

* See "Ireland and the Celtic Church" by Dr. G. T. Stokes.

more than two hundred years after his death although embodying perhaps an earlier account, and they are so full of the absurdly miraculous as to discredit their facts. All sorts of miracles are ascribed to this "holy saint," such as kindling a fire by blowing upon a heap of ice which he had gathered when they had no wood; killing a heathen magician *a la* Ananias and Saphira; raising a dead man whom he heard groaning under ground, (the grave was a hundred and twenty feet long), and finding he was suffering in hell, he preached to him, baptized him and sent him back to heaven. He gathered all the reptiles in Ireland upon the top of a hill and drove them all down through a ravine into the sea with "the staff of Jesus" which had been given him by the Lord on some island in the Mediterranean Sea;—one of the most remarkable round-ups on record. Reluctantly we withdraw our claim, but facts compel us to admit that Patrick was not a Baptist. If his work and that of his successors had been genuine gospel work and true to gospel principles, Ireland, largely free from influences which elsewhere corrupted the truth, and under better conditions than other lands for preserving New Testament christianity, would surely have had a different religious history than is written of her.

There remains, however, an interesting branch of British history which may show more Baptist characteristics. By the invasion of the Saxons, primitive christianity was early driven into the fastnesses of Wales where, it is claimed, it has existed to the present time in its purity. If this is true it will go far to establish a Baptist succession but we fear that thorough

investigation will show that this too was vitiated by the errors of priestly ordination and baptismal regeneration which were nearly or quite universal in the early centuries. Welsh Baptists have always claimed for themselves an apostolic origin, and it will gratify our denominational pride if they can prove it. It is certain that primitive christianity continued there for centuries from the beginning and also we can trace our churches back from the present for centuries; but will the records span the gap?

But now we return to the continent of Europe, where we begin to hear the rumble of the Reformation, to find in France another Baptist people called Petrobrusians from their leader, Peter of Bruys, who was burned alive in 1126. The Petrobrusians were unmistakably Baptists in their doctrines, their practices and their spirit. They were democratic in their organization, they baptized believers only, rejecting infant baptism as folly because an infant could exercise no faith, their only authority was the Bible and their great doctrine was salvation through faith in Christ alone. Their immersion excited no comment because the whole Catholic church at that time practiced it, but they were immersionists. Peter of Bruys was no more learned than Peter the apostle, but like him was full of the Holy Spirit and through him "much people turned to the Lord," burning their images and crosses and forsaking the Romish priests and places of worship. Thus the stream of Baptist influence begins again, to run with increasing breadth and power until checked and dried up by the fires of persecution which raged

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fiercely during and after the Reformation times.

Following the Petrobrusians were the Waldenses. Peter Waldo was converted to Christ in 1160 and began his work in the modern Baptist fashion of preaching and translating the Bible into the language of the common people. Persecution soon scattered the Waldensians into numberless sects, scarcely any two of which were alike, some of whom held quite closely to Baptist principles, but the most agreed more closely with Roman Catholic doctrines during the early part of their history at least. Afterwards they came to hold more scriptural views. But they were preachers of the gospel and colporters of the Bible. They went everywhere as peddlers of fabrics and gems and thus found opportunity to distribute bibles. Whittier has pictured the Waldensian peddler as he went about on his missionary work, in his beautiful poem "The Vaudois Teacher," a poem so beautiful that I quote it all:—

"O lady fair, these silks of mine are beautiful and rare,—
The richest web of the Indian loom, which beauty's queen might
wear;
And my pearls are pure as thy own fair neck, with whose radiant
light they vie;
I have brought them with me a weary way,—will my gentle lady
buy?"

And the lady smiled on the worn old man through the dark and
clustering curls
Which veiled her brow as she bent to view his silks and glittering
pearls;
And she placed their price in the old man's hand, and lightly turned
away,
But she paused at the wanderer's earnest call,—“My gentle lady,
stay!”

“O lady fair I have yet a gem which a purer luster flings,
Than the diamond flash of the jewelled crown on the lofty brow of
kings,—

A wonderful pearl of exceeding price, whose virtue shall not decay,
Whose light shall be a spell to thee and a blessing on thy way!”

The lady glanced at the mirroring steel where her form of grace was
seen,

Where her eye shone clear, and her dark locks waved their clasping
pearls between;

“Bring forth thy pearl of exceeding worth, thou traveller gray and
old;

And name the price of thy precious gem, and my page shall count
thy gold.”

The cloud went off from the pilgrim’s brow, as a small and meagre
book,

Unchased with gold or gem of cost, from his folding robe he took.

“Here, lady fair, is the pearl of price, may it prove as such to thee!
Nay—keep thy gold—I ask it not, for the Word of God is free!”

The hoary traveller went his way, but the gift he left behind
Hath had its pure and perfect work on that high born maiden’s mind,
And she hath turned from the pride of sin to the lowliness of truth,
And given her human heart to God in its beautiful hour of youth!

And she hath left the gray old halls, where an evil faith had power,
And courtly knights of her father’s train, and the maidens of her
bower;

And she hath gone to the Vaudois vales, by lordly feet untrod,
Where the poor and needy of earth are rich in the perfect love of God!

It is no wonder that the preaching of the gospel was
so joyfully received by the people, for it was to them
a new story entirely. They knew only forms and
ceremonies, tithes and penances, and the offer of a full
and free salvation through simple trust in Christ was as
new and blessed truth to them as to the veriest heathen.
It was to them as the preaching of the gospel has lately

been to the people of Cuba and Puerto Rico, so lately freed from Spanish and priestly oppression, and we have seen how eagerly it is accepted there.

The Petrobrusians and Waldenses seem to have been the immediate ancestors of the Anabaptists, who soon sprang up over Europe and thickest where they had been thickest. No definite origin can be assigned to the Anabaptists nor can we tell by whom the name was first given. They were not a new kind of people but the old kind under a new name, and they were doubtless only the spiritual descendants of those who before them had taught the pure gospel; but they multiplied exceedingly until the country was filled with them. In northern Switzerland they increased marvellously in the few years following 1520, as indeed also in Germany and Holland, and developed leaders who were worthy to rank with the martyrs of the past. Such were the noble Hubmeyer who was burned alive March 10, 1528; Blaurock, burned at the stake in the year following; Hetzer, beheaded in the same year; Felix Mantz, drowned in 1527; Sattler, torn with red hot pincers and burned in the same year; and Grebel, who, for a wonder, died a natural death.

Zwingli himself began his career with a declaration of the fundamental Baptist principle that demands obedience to the word of God in all matters of faith and rejects what is not therein contained, but when he began to see where this principle would lead him he refused to follow it. He soon saw that in following this principle he must reject infant baptism, baptize only believers, have a church composed of those only who had personal

faith in Christ, and cut loose entirely from the powers of the world as to the support of his work. Luther also came to the same place and in like manner turned back. Both these reformers wished to return to Bible christianity, but both depended upon the civil power to bring it to pass. They had not enough faith in God, in the simple power of the truth and in the conscientious honesty of the people to cut loose from the world and go forth, as did the Apostles, in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Anabaptists did have, and they wrought grandly even unto death, while these reformers turned back to lean upon the unsanctified arm of human power—and spoiled their work; and Europe is what it is to-day, spiritually formal and dead, because the Reformers prevailed and the Anabaptists were destroyed.

From Switzerland we follow this movement into Germany where also “mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.” They spread over Bavaria; in Silesia infant baptism became almost extinct; in Augsburg their church numbered eight hundred members in 1527, and eleven hundred a few years later when they had for their leader the noble and distinguished John Denck. We can not follow their growth in detail, but suffice it to say that they were found in almost every province and city and often in great numbers, until their rapid increase seemed likely to overturn the state church, and led to their bitter persecution and final extinction. The story of their horrible persecution and cold blooded murder is too sickening to follow in detail but we shall see something of it in our next lecture; a people godly and true, peaceable and honest, harried and hunted like

wild beasts until there was nothing of them remaining.

The remnant that escaped from Germany took refuge in Holland where they were known as Mennonites from the name of their leader, Menno Simon, and where, partly from their change of name and partly from their obscurity, they were suffered for a time to dwell more securely, though afterwards they suffered more fearfully than ever. The Mennonites continue to this day both in Holland and in America.

But you will be much surprised to learn that most of the Anabaptists of the sixteenth century did not baptize; they were not immersionists. Apparently they generally practiced sprinkling or pouring, though immersion was practiced by those of St. Gall, Augsburg, Strassburg and by the Anti-Trinitarian Anabaptists of Poland. Even the noble Hubmeyer is said to have "baptized" three hundred out of a milk pail. "But then," you say, "they were not Baptists!" O yes they were,—in every principle except this, but of course inconsistent. For immersion alone does not by any means make a Baptist, although of course, it is necessary to make a complete one. We forget that immersion is not and never was, the fundamental article of our faith, but only a necessary deduction from our fundamental principle. It is one of the two things that is most prominent in the minds of other people when they think of us, but let us not be ourselves beguiled into thinking that all the difference between us and other christians is that we immerse and they sprinkle. The real difference lies far deeper than this. The truth in regard to immersion is that for twelve centuries it was

the universal practice, by Roman Catholics, the Greek Church, dissenters of every kind, and by the British and Irish churches. Then there is a gap of three hundred years or more when it was largely supplanted by sprinkling and pouring, until it was again revived by the English and Dutch Baptists and has continued to the present time. The Greek church has never practiced anything else and does not to-day. The great contention of these Anabaptists was for a *converted church*, and that has been the contention of Baptists always; that baptism and church membership were and are only for personal believers in Christ. This, rather than the necessity of immersion, is and always has been the controlling idea of a Baptist church, and this has separated them from all others. Their opposition and protest was against a church which included both godly and godless, ministered to by priests who were extortionate and unchaste, a church controlled by princes that were often wicked and immoral, knowing nothing of Christ, a church that only robbed the people and left them to go down to perdition in their ignorance of gospel truth; and it seems not to have occurred to them with any force that they themselves were violating scripture in a very important particular. The controversy of their day was not on this point and it was not until later that the inconsistency was seen, although it seems strange that it was not seen from the first.

It is not too much to say that this fundamental idea of a converted church, which had persisted through all these centuries, kept alive by the various influences mentioned, was what made the Reformation possible.

These were they that preached the real gospel and the contrast of their pure lives and doctrine made the Papacy more odious than ever and prepared the people to turn from it. Indeed, as the learned Dr. Kellar says, the Anabaptist movement *was the real Reformation movement*. It was the truest gospel movement of the age, (notwithstanding it developed, in some of its aspects, into fanaticism), not simply lopping off some of the abuses of a corrupt church and leaving the seeds of corruption still in their vigor to produce another like harvest, but bringing the people back to a pure New Testament christianity as Christ and his Apostles taught it. If they could have had their way the modern religious history of Europe would have been entirely changed, and it would not have lapsed into that kind of a false and dead christianity which it is today, the hot-bed of rationalism and infidelity, and needing missionaries of the gospel for its conversion as well as any heathen land. Europe is, religiously, four hundred years behind what it would have been but for the extermination of this people. But the fear and jealousy and even hatred of Catholic and Lutheran alike followed them until their leaders were slain and their organizations annihilated, and Baptist history disappears from Germany and Southern Europe until the appearance of Dr. Oncken in 1834. Baptists in Germany now number about twenty-eight thousand.

So the line runs from Germany to Holland, and now from Holland to England and from England to America. The exact connection of English with Dutch Baptists is not clear. Certain it is that early in the sixteenth

century some Dutch Baptists fled to England, but only to meet the same sorrows from which they had fled. Some of the first English Baptists also sent to Holland for their baptism, as no immersed person was found among them. There are evidences of many migrations of German and Dutch Baptists into England even as early as 1160 and from that onwards. Orchard says that there was a Baptist church at Chesterton in 1457, and gives his reasons for believing that such churches had existed there from the time of William the Conqueror. But however they originated, their history becomes clear about 1612 when the first modern Baptist church was formed in London. In 1626 this had increased to eleven churches, and in 1644, to forty-seven. The Welsh Baptists in connection with Vavasor Powell were reckoned in 1654 at twenty thousand.* Their confession of faith in 1660 is said to have been approved by more than twenty thousand. Indeed, before this time their influence had become so marked and the opposition to infant baptism so strong that not only were many treatises published against it and rational arguments used by godly men, but it was openly caricatured by the ungodly, so that cats and colts were derisively christened in ridicule of it.† Their number in England is now about two hundred and thirty-one thousand, and in all of Great Britain about three hundred and seventy-five thousand. Their history there was a long struggle for toleration, (for England has not yet secured full religious liberty, but only toleration,) which was refused them first by the Episcopal body and

*Orchard, Hist. Eng. Bap. p 284. †Orchard, p 272.

then by the Presbyterian, until the Act of Toleration in 1689, since which time active persecution in England has ceased.

But Baptists have had their fullest and freest development in "the land of the free" and this development is enough familiar to us so that I do not need to trace it. The first church organized by them in this country and still existing was formed in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1639, (though Newport claims that the present Providence church is not the original church and that the Newport branch of it is, and is therefore the oldest,) and the growth has been rapid. In 1700 they had but twelve churches in the American colonies. In 1804 Backus estimated them as having twelve hundred churches and one hundred thousand members. In 1812 they numbered one hundred and seventy-three thousand, in 1873 they had grown to one and a half millions, and in 1899 they number four millions, one hundred and forty-two thousand, and if we include those bodies that are really Baptist though not given in our own reports, they number four millions, three hundred and seventy thousand in the United States, not including a hundred and twenty-four thousand "Christians" and a million and eighty-five thousand "Disciples."

The period of struggle, as far as this country is concerned, is past and our position is one of respectability and power. The directly evangelistic character of our work gives promise of still more rapid growth, and the prominence given to christian education will lead to a still more stable church and a more powerful influence on others. The net increase this year (1899) over last

in the United States is eighty-six thousand, one hundred and eighty-nine.

Our statistics are never complete because we have no way of requiring official reports, as in other bodies, and the various clerks never do their whole duty; but as nearly as the facts can be ascertained they are given in our Year Book, (though certainly not up to the actual totals,) and are as follows for the beginning of the year 1899:

Number of Baptists in the United States, .	4,141,995
“ “ in the rest of N. America, . . .	143,098
“ “ in South America, . . .	1,389
“ “ in Europe,	478,268
“ “ in Asia,	119,745
“ “ in Africa,	6,700
“ “ in Australasia,	19,261
<hr/>	
Making a grand total of	4,910,456
The total net gain over last year being . .	131,332

To these figures ought properly to be added those of such bodies as the Free Baptists, the Dunkards, the Seventh Day Baptists, (*not* the Seventh Day Adventists,) the Stundists, etc., of whose numbers we have no account, for they are also Baptists as judged by the broad definition we have given.

We are therefore, in fellowship with a grand company both present and past. Our brethren have not been, for the most part, famous in the world, not princes nor millionaires, but they have been *true* and they have been known of God and blessed. To such

prosperity and strength as this have we grown and our principles have been accepted far and wide. Let us remember that the days of prosperity are the days of danger, and let us fear lest liberty and prosperity shall do for us what the dungeon and the stake were not able to do,—turn us from a faithful witnessing for God, and a steadfast and unworldly life. “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not; . . . and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works.”

"And others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheepskins, in goat skins; being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated, (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth. And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect."

III.

THE SUFFERINGS OF BAPTISTS.

In considering this part of our subject we need to make a clear distinction between the sufferings of christians as christians and the sufferings of christians as Baptists: for persecution of christians by pagans and because they are christians is one thing, and persecution of one sort of christians by another sort of christians and because they are of another sort, is quite another thing. The very early christians were Baptists as we have seen, and they suffered; but they suffered, not because they were Baptists and differed from other christians, but because they were christians and differed from Jew and pagan. What we are to consider is the sufferings that came upon our spiritual ancestors on account of those doctrines and practices which marked them as a distinct people among christians, and which form the substance of our faith today.

It is evident that there would be no persecution among christians (or those who were called such) until the church had become powerful enough to control the secular power to a large degree, and unspiritual enough to be intolerant of those who might oppose its interests;

and that did not come to pass until the rise of the Papacy and its establishment in temporal power so that princes and potentates would do its bidding. And again, there would be no persecution until a considerable body arose to call in question the doctrines or practices of this dominating body and refuse obedience to it. As long as no one protested against the perversion of baptism by administering it to unconscious babes, and the consequent ignoring of the fundamental doctrine of christianity, that salvation is through a personal faith in Jesus Christ, no one would be burned alive for their protest. But the true gospel had practically died out of continental Europe and it was not until the twelfth century that a people arose to protest and suffer. The main story of Baptist sufferings, then, begins with the twelfth century.

But this was not the first of persecution for holding our principles, which began, indeed, very early. The Novatians, who arose in the latter half of the third century, were ana-baptists, for they re-baptized those who came to them, though for a somewhat different reason than those who were later called Anabaptists. They were separatists and considered that all ordinances of the body from which they had separated were null and void because the body itself was corrupt in life and lax in discipline. The Donatists, beginning in the fourth century, were also ana-baptists, and held much in common with us, as they refused to baptize children, re-baptized those who came to them from the Catholics, their churches were independent and they repudiated the union of church and state. Their questions: "What

has the Emperor to do with the church?" and "What have christians to do with kings, or what have bishops to do with a court?" sound very pertinent and refreshing even now. Their influence became so strong that Honorius and Theodosius, the emperors of the East and West, were prevailed upon to issue a decree in the year 413 that both persons who re-baptized and persons who were re-baptized should suffer death; and two years later the council of Mela in Numidia, with Augustine at its head, decreed "We will that whoever denies that children by baptism are freed from perdition and eternally saved, that they be accursed." Many martyrdoms and much suffering were the results of these measures.* The Donatists continued for more than four hundred years amid constant suffering. Their persecution ended with their extinction and infant baptism was for centuries triumphant.

But let it be fully understood that the persecution of Baptists was never for their immersion, (although individuals have often been harassed for that in modern times) but for their insistence upon a *converted church membership* and for their denial of infant baptism, which two things are practically one. That that was a church of Christ which was composed of unregenerated and unspiritual persons, and that one could be made a christian by the sprinkling of water with due ceremonial form even in unconscious infancy, is what Baptists

*In the space of fifteen years Theodosius promulgated at least fifteen severe edicts against heretics. Heretical teachers were exposed to exile and confiscation. Religious meetings, by day or night, in cities or in the country, were proscribed, and the building or ground where the assembly was held was forfeited. "The office of Inquisitor of the Faith, a name so deservedly abhorred, was first instituted under the reign of Theodosius." Dutch Martyrology II, p. 187, note. London, 1853.

have always and everywhere denied. And that is just what was believed in those days and is believed by multitudes still—that baptism made their babies christians—and believing it they, of course, had them “baptized.” It is hard for us now to realize that anybody ever really believed that simply the performance of such a ceremony could save a child, without choice or faith or any action whatever on the part of the child, but they actually did, and believing it, consistently “baptized” their children. And that is the only possible ground or justification of infant baptism. If you believe that baptism will save your child of course you will have it baptized; but if you do not, there is no reasonable reason to be given why you should do so. They, therefore, practiced infant baptism consistently but many of those who now practice it do so inconsistently, for they deny the doctrine of baptismal regeneration while they continue the practice which originated from and has its only justification in that doctrine. As the German woman said to the amazed Congregational minister who asked her if she really thought he could regenerate her babies and give them a title to eternal life by merely putting a little water on their heads, “To pe sure you can; and if you can’t, vot’s de good of it?” Who can answer her question?

Nobody ever quarreled with us on account of our immersion or denied its validity, except that quite recently a few have been driven by stress of argument to deny that it is scriptural at all. The evidence is abundant that for thirteen hundred years immersion was universally practiced and that any other form of

baptism, if admitted at all, was admitted only as exceptional, and valid only in cases where immersion could not be performed. There was never any dispute about this. There was a dispute for a thousand years as to whether the candidate should be dipped three times or only once, but there was never any dispute as to whether he should be dipped at all. It was the apostolic baptism, as is now admitted by candid scholars of every belief, and no man with any reputation for learning would wish to risk his reputation as a scholar by a published statement to the contrary. If one of the pillars of that old first church in Jerusalem could appear on earth to-day, and happen in to the services of one of these paedobaptist churches in time to see an infant "baptized" or an adult sprinkled, he would not in the least comprehend the ceremony nor understand what it meant, for in all his life he never saw anything like it. It certainly never would enter his mind that it was meant for a baptism. It was clearly the baptism of the early churches succeeding the apostolic times. It was the baptism of the British and Irish churches. It was the baptism of the Eastern or Greek church, and still is, and it always seemed to me that those Greeks ought to be able to understand their own language in which the Apostles wrote. They "baptize" infants, but they always immerse them.* It was also the baptism of the Western church. Clovis, king of the Franks, was immersed with three thousand of his warriors in the year 476, and the font or baptistery in

*A very interesting description of a Greek baptism is given in the Baptist Quarterly Review, 1870, p 80.

which tradition says it was done is still to be seen in Paris. On Easter day in the year 627 bishop Paulinus immersed three thousand Northumbrians in a pool about two miles from Harbottle, England, and a monument in the shape of a cross stands in the middle of the pool, bearing an inscription which declares that fact. The pool is about twenty-four by twenty feet in size and two feet deep at present, and by closing the outlet could be made much deeper. Mosaics and paintings from the fourth century to the thirteenth set forth baptism as an immersion. Venerable Bede the historian, who died about the year 735, after describing various immersions and baptisteries, says: "For he truly who is baptized is seen to descend into the fountain; he is seen to be dipped in the waters; he is seen to ascend from the waters." Cardinal Pulis, who lectured at both Oxford and Paris, and was a very learned man, writes in the year 1150: "Whilst the candidate for baptism in water is immersed, the death of Christ is suggested; whilst immersed and covered with water, the burial of Christ is shown forth; whilst he is raised from the waters, the resurrection of Christ is proclaimed. The immersion is repeated three times."

There was no definite time when the change from immersion to sprinkling can be said to have been made, or the practice of sprinkling to have originated. Pouring can be traced to a definite beginning but sprinkling can not; like Topsy, it "jest grewed." We find the Council of London in the year 1200 enjoining immersion. That of Sarum in 1217 and that of Oxford in 1222 did the same. In 1240 the Synod of Worcester decreed;

"In every church where baptism is performed there shall be a font of stone of sufficient size and depth for the baptism of children, and let the candidate for baptism be always immersed." These decrees might seem to show that an innovation upon the ancient method had already begun. In 1311 the council at Ravenna permits sprinkling as exceptional, and before this it had no formal sanction. Immersion continued the rule in England until after 1450. The catechism of 1604 makes sprinkling valid, and within a hundred years from that date that which had been the exception became the rule and the ancient immersion was superseded.

Dean Stanley says in his famous essay on baptism: "In the Church of England, immersion is still observed in theory. The rubric in the public baptism for infants enjoins that unless for special causes they are to be dipped, not sprinkled. Edward the Sixth and Elizabeth were both immersed. But since the beginning of the seventeenth century the practice has become exceedingly rare."

Even as late as August 7th, 1664, the noted Westminster Assembly, which framed the great confession of faith known as the Westminster Confession, fell into a "great heat" over the question of immersion. The matter is worth giving in the quaint language of Dr. Lightfoot, who kept a journal of the proceedings. "Then fell we upon the work of the day, which was about the baptism of the child, whether to dip or sprinkle him; and this proposition, "It is lawful and sufficient to besprinkle the child," had been canvassed

before our adjournment and was ready now to vote. But I spoke against it as being very unfit to vote that it is lawful to sprinkle when everyone grants it. Whereupon it was fallen upon, sprinkling being granted, whether dipping should be tolerated with it. And here fell we upon a large and long discourse whether dipping were essential or used in the first institution or in the Jews' custom . . . After a long dispute it was at last put to the question whether the Directory should run, "The minister shall take water and sprinkle or pour it with his hand upon the face or forehead of the child;" and it was voted so indifferently that we were glad to count names twice; for so many were unwilling to have dipping excluded that the vote came to an equality within one; for the one side was twenty-four, the other twenty-five,—the twenty-four for the reserving of dipping and the twenty-five against it. And then grew a great heat upon it; and when we had done all we concluded upon nothing in it, but the business was recommitted." The next day it was voted that the Directory should read, "He is to baptize the child with water, which, for the manner of doing it, is not only lawful but also sufficient and most expedient to be by pouring or sprinkling water upon the face of the child without any other ceremony." Note in this account that immersion was not excluded but sprinkling was permitted; and note, also, the narrow majority by which it was carried on the first vote.

The following from the dairy of John Wesley, written in Savannah, Georgia, ought to be of interest, at least to our Methodist brethren. "Saturday, 21st, February,

(1736). Mary Welch, aged eleven days, was baptized according to the custom of the first church and the rule of the church of England, by immersion. The child was ill then but recovered from that hour." And again, "Wednesday, May 5th. I was asked to baptize a child of Mr. Parker, second bailiff of Savannah. But Mrs. Parker told me, "Neither Mr. Parker nor I will consent to its being dipped." I answered, "If you will certify that your child is weak it will suffice, the rubric says, to pour water upon it." She replied, "Nay, the child is not weak but I am resolved it shall not be dipped." This argument I could not confute. So I went home and the child was baptized by another person."

I could easily spend the whole hour in reading you testimonies gathered from various writers living in different countries and all the way down from the first century to the thirteenth, showing that during all this time immersion was the universal practice throughout all christendom, but will add only the following words of Dean Stanley who sums up the whole matter thus:—"For the first thirteen centuries the almost universal practice of baptism was that of which we read in the New Testament, and such is the very meaning of the word "baptize" that those who were baptized were plunged, submerged, immersed into water." He adds, "Baptism by sprinkling was rejected by the whole ancient church (except in the rare case of death-beds or extreme necessity) as no baptism at all."

Nobody, therefore, ever had any quarrel with us on account of our immersion. The great matter of con-

troversy was first as to the subjects of baptism, and later, both as to subjects and form. *The whole horrid history of Baptist persecutions has been on account of infant baptism.* We can hardly comprehend what an awful hold the idea that infant baptism *saves the child* has had on christendom, so that for centuries all christendom lived and died in the full and complacent belief of it. It was not strange, then, that men were thrown into consternation when this foundation stone of salvation was threatened with removal, nor that their wrath was stirred against those who denied the reality of that salvation in which they so implicitly believed. To save that "beautiful" and "impressive rite," that "triumph of christian charity" as some call it; to save that masterpiece of Satan's ingenuity, as it really is; by which more has been done to block the progress of the kingdom of God than by any other thing that ever was; by which more corruption has been brought into the christian church; by which more people have been put beyond the reach of converting influences than by any other; by which untold millions of unregenerated, unsaved sinners have been made to go down to perdition in the full belief that they were christians and heirs of eternal life;—to save this, fires have been kindled, racks have been stretched, swords have been sharpened, and oceans of innocent blood have been shed. Rightly does the Presbyterian Dr. John Robertson of Glasgow call it "a sinful addition to and reversal of the Word of God," a "traditional lie," a "devil's delusion." He says, "You may like it or dislike it, baby sprinkling, as a simple addendum to the Word of God, and as such

inheriting the curse in the 19th verse of the 23rd Revelation on all such human or diabolical addenda, is an infernal lie. By this devil's door of baby-sprinkling the great heresy of the church, the *ex opere operato* delusion, the Roman and the Anglican semi-Roman error of errors, baptismal regeneration, stalked in to tread its grim march of death over the graves of the multitudes of souls it has slain and damned forever!" This is from a sermon preached in his own church, the City Temple Presbyterian Church of Glasgow, to a congregation of four thousand people. The whole sermon is very interesting reading and I heartily commend it to our Presbyterian brethren. If a Baptist should use such language as this there would be an uproar, but when a Presbyterian says it perhaps we may be permitted to say "Amen."

Infant baptism means baptismal regeneration; it means sacramental efficacy, that is, salvation by the magical influence of rites and ceremonies instead of by personal faith; it means the perversion of the scriptures and the setting up of man's authority above Christ's; it means an unconverted church; it means spiritual things administered by unspiritual men; it means the church a human institution and run on human principles; and this is shown by actual experience as well as by logical deduction. Against this Baptists have always protested, and for their protest have been hated and imprisoned and tortured and murdered. Let me repeat it again;—the great reason for the persecution of Baptists in times past and the hostility shown them in time present is and has always been *their rejection of infant baptism.*

This is shown in many ways; by the charges of their opponents, by the topics in disputations held and by the question always and everywhere asked, if they believed infants should be baptized or could be saved without baptism, and especially in the language of the decrees by which they were condemned. The phrase constantly recurring in the decrees of their condemnation is "because he held that the baptism of infants did not profit," or "that the baptism of infants is unlawful," and "for the error of ana-baptism," i. e. re-baptism, and "for re-baptizing." But why condemn for *re*-baptizing? What harm in two baptisms? Evidently this, that a re-baptism is a declaration that the former baptism was not valid. There is no other reason for a second one, and this reason is clearly stated in some of their decrees. It is the same thing that compels a Methodist or Congregational pastor of to-day to refuse to immerse one who is dissatisfied with his infant or other sprinkling, (and their name is legion). For him to do so would be to contradict his own teaching, admit the invalidity of his own practices and endorse the position of the Baptist. In the last Methodist General Conference the statement was made that they are losing to the Baptists more than five thousand members every year on account of dissatisfaction with their baptism received in infancy, or sprinkling received in later years, and to remedy this it was proposed to allow their ministers to immerse those whose consciences were thus troubled. But the proposition was wisely smothered, for that would have been a practical concession of our whole contention as to this subject.

This denial of infant baptism and *not* peculiarities in regard to the "communion" is the real ground of opposition to Baptists today. This is why we are by some actually hated, by others shunned, and by many more regarded with suspicion. But to make so called "close communion" the ground of opposition is an entire mistake. So are the Presbyterians "close communionists," for they will not "commune" with the unbaptized, and there are more than a hundred and fifteen thousand of them in this country who will not even "commune" with other Presbyterians.* So are the Episcopalians "close communionists" for the same reason. So are the Lutherans and so at least in theory, is every other church.† None of these, except as moved by the loose modern liberalism, will "commune" with the unbaptized. No, it is not that they are shut out from our christian fellowship, for they have it in all practical ways and have it heartily. It is not that they desire with us to commemorate the Lord's sufferings and are grieved because they cannot. They do not mingle largely with each other in this observance, and if we should throw down all bars and freely invite them in they would not come after the novelty had worn off. They want their baptism endorsed, and that is the whole controversy. The only ground on which we refuse to sit at the Lord's table with them is their lack of christian baptism, and our practice continually says to them, "You are not baptized, *you are not baptized*, YOU ARE NOT BAPTIZED," and that is the whole offense.

But further; infant baptism itself is of the nature of

*The United Presbyterians and the Reformed (Covenanter) Presbyterians.

†Except, perhaps, the "Disciples."

persecution. It is the performance of a very important religious act for the individual without his knowledge or consent, depriving him of the privilege of conscious obedience in the matter. It is doing for him a thing of which his own conscience may not afterwards approve, and when in mature years he wishes to be baptized, the privilege is denied him on the ground that he has *been* baptized. It thus *denies the right of individual choice*, which is the very essence and underlying principle of persecution. An incident in my own pastorate a few years ago will illustrate this. A very lovely young christian woman of my congregation, who had longed for the privilege of following Christ in baptism but had been hindered by opposing parents and relatives, was dying of quick consumption and was already too weak to argue any matter or even to converse. She was visited by the Rector of her mother's church, who took her severely to task for wishing to leave the bosom of "The Church" and ridiculed the people of her choice unsparingly. He told her that she had no *right* to unite with a Baptist church, (she was of full age,) that she belonged to them by reason of her infant baptism and training and that nothing she could do would change that relation, and that even if she should unite with another church such action would be null and void, and much more of the same sort. Had she been strong enough she would have given him some information that would have done him good, but under the circumstances it was an outrage. Here was an explicit denial of her right of choice or the exercise of her own conscience concerning her christian

duty, on the ground that it had all been settled for her before she was old enough to know anything about it. He needed but one thing more to make it full fledged persecution, and that was the power to tell her "And if you do go into that church we will burn you for it."

And furthermore, the only body that has persistently repudiated infant baptism is the only body that has never persecuted any one or advocated principles that lead to persecution;—except, of course, those who repudiate all external ordinances, as the Quakers and some heretical sects, and except also those churches whose origin was since the days of gross persecution passed away. Baptists have never anywhere persecuted others nor sought or accepted such an alliance with the secular power as would have made such persecution possible. This statement has seemed to some like vaunting ourselves above others and has been denied, but consider the following facts:—

1. Their fundamental doctrine of personal faith and personal responsibility; that religion is a matter between the individual soul and God alone, and that for the performance of any and every religious duty whatever the individual is responsible only to God. This is the doctrine of soul liberty; that inasmuch as the soul is responsible directly and only to God, no man has any right either to force or forbid any one as to any matter of religious belief or practice. That doctrine made it impossible for them to persecute.

2. The wide spread doctrine, held for centuries by them, that a christian ought not to bear the sword, that is, be a magistrate; without which of course there could

be no compulsion of others. This teaching was clearly a mistake, for if any man should be a christian and act in the fear of God, surely he should whose duty it is to rule and to judge. It was a christian doctrine as they meant it, but it seemed to their enemies to be dangerous socialism and it added much to their sufferings.

3. The first government ever formed by Baptists and on Baptist principles specifically forbade any interference by any one with the conscience of another, and decreed that "No person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be in any wise molested, punished, disquieted or called in question for any difference of opinion in matters of religion." I shall refer to this again.

If the matter is still disputed however, I demand an instance, and challenge any one to show where and when Baptists have persecuted in any wise. Dr. J. L. M. Curry truly says, "No Baptist church can be found [in history] which has ever favored an alliance with government, and no Baptist author can be adduced who has advocated the use of civil authority to control or regulate religious belief."* One single Baptist church has been found however, the South Brimfield church in Massachusetts, which did for a single year accept money raised by taxation for the support of their pastor. They had been persuaded to this by some dissatisfied Congregational brethren, but they saw their mistake, unanimously voted to publish a confession of it, asked forgiveness of God and their brethren, and, let us hope, were forgiven.†

*Struggles and Triumphs of Virginia Baptists, p. 25.

†Life and Times of Isaac Backus, p. 277.

“But” you say, “they never had a chance; they never had control.” Yes, but they have. They had control in Rhode Island and they made religion absolutely free. They had opportunity when offered state support and adoption as the state church in Holland in 1819, and refused it. They had opportunity in Georgia in 1785 when the legislature voted a state tax for the support of churches, and they secured the repeal of the measure. They were in the majority in a large part of the state and would have received much money by it, but they opposed it unanimously. They have control in some of the states of the Union today but there is no disposition to take advantage of it. Those who insist that every applicant shall give evidence of the possession of the spirit of Christ before admission to the church at all are not the ones to violate that spirit by the persecution of their fellow christians. The great heresy of the ages and the prolific root of every sort of cruelty has been *infant baptism*.

The days of persecution seem like the memory of some frightful dream. What a nightmare of horrors history has been! It seems almost incredible that a time could ever have been when such things were possible, and we are almost persuaded that their story is the product of some one's diseased imagination. It seems incredible that at least three millions of christians should have been murdered for their faith before the year 312, yet that estimate has been made and it seems not improbable, and certainly more than that number have been murdered for their faith since that time. We were exceedingly shocked by the horrors of Bulgaria in

1876 and of Armenia in 1896, and the cold chills ran over us as we read the description by an eye-witness of a ghastly pile of three hundred human bodies thrown together by "the unspeakable Turk;" but what shall we say when sober historians tell us of *thirty thousand* Waldensians butchered for their faith and thrown into a single heap at the instigation of the "Holy Catholic Church," of *sixty thousand* murdered in that single campaign, of two hundred thousand destroyed in a few months, and this followed by other and still other butcheries until the heart grows sick and the head faint at the recital!

What Baptists have suffered is too sickening to read and too horrible to tell: in Germany, in Switzerland, in Holland, in Moravia, in Austria, in Italy, in France, in England. Even in America they suffered; in Massachusetts, in Connecticut, in Virginia, in New York, in South Carolina, and so lately that those now living have heard their fathers and grandfathers tell the story. It does not appear however, that any Baptist suffered death for his faith in America except indirectly as the result of imprisonment etc., although four Quakers were hung in Boston, two in 1659, one in 1660 and one in 1661, for the crime of being Quakers. The story of these sufferings can not now be given in detail for that would require many volumes to be written, and we can only gather up some samples and indications of the whole.

To get some idea of the awfulness of the persecutions of Baptists, consider how wide spread and numerous they were and then remember that except in Holland,

they were *utterly exterminated*. In the year 1530 there was scarcely a village in the Netherlands where they were not found, and in many localities they were the leading influence. In Friesland one out of every four was a Baptist, and they are not more numerous in any place in the world today. The state of Georgia gives us the same proportion, one out of four. As to Germany, Dr. Kellar, the archivist of Munster, who probably knows more about the Anabaptists than any other living man, says; "The more I examine the documents at my command the more I am astonished at the extent of the diffusion of Anabaptist views; an extent no other investigator has any knowledge of." He speaks of their churches in city after city and province after province all over the German empire and from the North Sea to the Alps. They must have been numbered by the hundreds of thousands, and yet they were *exterminated*. So numerous were they that in many places Catholic and Lutheran priests could find no occupation, and they complain that their churches are deserted, their teachings held in contempt, and the infants withheld from baptism; although they may possibly have exaggerated their grievances.

In Moravia there were estimated to be seventy thousand Baptists, which would make them about as numerous as in Massachusetts at the present time. They must have been more numerous in many provinces than they now are in most of the United States, for, taking the whole Union together, Baptists number about one in seventeen of the population. In Minnesota they number only one in eighty-four; in Wisconsin, one in seventy-

four; in Michigan, one in thirty-eight; in New York, one in thirty-four; and so on down to Virginia with its three hundred and thirty-three thousand Baptists, or one in four and two-thirds, and Georgia with its three hundred and seventy-seven thousand, or one in four. Consider what a task it would be to exterminate the Baptists of even a single state of the Union, and yet all those hosts of central Europe were utterly annihilated. They were systematically hunted out, as men hunt wolves, with the set purpose of their complete extinction, and that extinction was accomplished, so that for nearly two hundred years not a Baptist was known in the greater part of Europe.

For generation after generation it was as much a crime to be a Baptist as to be a murderer. Nay, more a crime; for there was often mercy for the murderer or the lecherous villain, but for the Baptist, none. They had no protection for life or property. It was a crime for them to meet and pray together; a crime to preach the gospel; a crime to instruct any one in the way of life; a crime even to believe the teachings of Jesus. It was a crime to deny any of the monstrous teachings of the Roman Catholic church or the less mistaken teachings of the Reformed churches. It was a crime to teach any one of those truths which we hold most precious; and above all was it a crime to do that which is the most precious privilege of a Baptist minister, baptize a believing convert.

For these things they were beheaded, they were drowned, they were sent to the galleys, they were burned alive, they were buried alive, yes, some were actually

boiled alive! Not to speak of the slow torture of death by starvation and in foul prisons where they died in a manner worthy of Libby prison or Andersonville. Says the chronicler, speaking of Moravia; "Some were torn to pieces on the rack; some were burned to ashes and powder; some were roasted on pillars; some were torn with red hot tongs; some were shut up in houses and burned in masses; some were hanged on trees; some were executed with the sword; some were plunged into the water; many had gags put into their mouths so that they could not speak and so were led away to death. Like sheep and lambs, crowds of them were led away to be butchered and slaughtered. Others were starved or allowed to rot in noisome prisons. Many had holes burned in their backs and were left in this condition. Like owls and bitterns they dared not go abroad by day but lived and crouched in rocks and caverns, in wild forests, in caves and pits. Many were hunted down with hounds and catchpoles," and so the horrid recital goes on. In Switzerland they were often tied at intervals to a long rope made fast to the neck, and then made to stand together upon some overhanging rock or platform, so that when the foremost was pushed off into the water, each in falling would drag the next one after him, and so all would drown together both men and women.

They were systematically robbed of all they had for the benefit of their persecutors. Their wills and contracts were rendered void and their business ruined. They were driven from their homes in winter to freeze to death or to starve. Men were imprisoned for sheltering them, for giving them food, or even for failing to

report them. Men were tortured to make them tell if they knew where any poor Baptist was in hiding. The infamous edict of the Zwinglian authorities at Zurich in 1530 and the still more infamous edict of Charles V in 1535 not only decreed death to the Anabaptist without mercy, but severe punishments upon any who should fail or hesitate in their zeal in hunting them out. The even more atrocious edict of Philip II, who succeeded Charles V in 1535, demands that the men be "punished with the sword; and the women by being buried alive, if they do not maintain or defend their errors. But in case they persist in their errors, opinions or heresies, they shall be executed by fire;" and declares that if any fail to make them known or shall harbor them in any way they shall "be punished with the same punishment as the heretic or criminal would be, if he were taken and imprisoned." Many engaged in the wicked work through fear for themselves, whose feelings of humanity would otherwise have kept them from it. Every form of meanest treachery was devised to trap them, and spies were even hired to profess conversion with hypocritical tears, in order that they might be admitted to their secrets and so betray their hiding places to those who sought their lives. Their tongues were often bored or burned, or even cut out, in order that they might not be able to speak to the multitudes assembled at their execution and infect them with their heresy. Their leaders were not only butchered but tortured with a cruelty that would shame an American savage;—men with whom, for sweetness of spirit, for nobility of character and spiritual culture as well as scholarship

and learning, such a one as Luther, much as he is praised, is not to be compared. For example Jacob Huter, a godly man and a wondrously successful preacher of the gospel, was seized and gagged and led away to Innsbruck, where he was first thrown into cold water and then into hot water, his flesh was torn with red hot pincers and the wounds were filled with brandy, and then the brandy was set on fire, and in this awful torture he perished. Devils fresh from hell could not invent worse torments than these gentle representatives of a "holy" church, every one of whom had been "baptized" in his infancy and thereby had "become regenerate and grafted into the church of Jesus Christ." But the story is too horrible to tell. If I were simply to detail the list of horrors visited upon our poor Baptist brethren, the women of this audience would faint in their seats and the men would drive me from the platform. And all this, mind you, was done in the name of God and of his Christ and with the utmost sanctimoniousness conceivable. Let me give you a sample decree taken from the records of the Inquisition in Switzerland in 1430:—

"In the name of God, Amen. We, Br. Ulrich of Torrente of the Dominican order of Lausanne, and with full Apostolic authority Inquisitor of heretical iniquity in the diocese of Lausanne; and John de Columpnis, Licentiate and specially appointed to this work by the venerable father in Christ, Lord William of Challant, Bishop of Lausanne, have directed by the pure process of the Inquisition that you, Peter Sager, now 60 years old, born at Montrich, thirty years and more ago fore-

swore the Waldensian heresy in the city of Berne, but since that time have returned to that preverse faith like a dog to his vomit and held and done many things detestable and vile against the most holy and venerable Roman church. You *have stubbornly asserted that there is no purgatory but only heaven and hell; that masses and intercessions and alms for the souls of the departed are of no avail;* and there are many other things proven against you in your trial that show that you have fallen back into heresy. O grief! Therefore after consideration and investigation and mature consideration and weighing of evidence; and after consulting the statutes both of human and divine law and arming ourselves with the revered sign of the Holy Cross, we declare; In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, Amen; that our decision may proceed from the presence of God and our eyes behold justice, turning neither to the right nor left but fixed on God and the holy scriptures, we make known as our final sentence that you Peter Sager are and have been a heretic, treacherously recreant to your oath of recantation. As a relapsed heretic we commit you to the arm of the secular power. However we entreat the secular authorities to execute the sentence of death more mildly than the canonical statutes require, particularly as to the mutilation of the members of the body. We further decree that all and every property that belongs to you Peter, is confiscated and after being divided into three parts, the first part shall go to the government, the second to the officers of the Inquisition and the third to pay the expenses of the trial."

And the following is found upon the town record as to the expenses of the execution:

Paid to Master Garnaucie for burning Peter

Sager,	. . . . .	20 shillings.
For cords and stake,	. . . . .	10 “
For the pains of the executioner,	. . . . .	28 “

Special watchman during the execution

in the city,	17 shillings, 6 pfennings.
Special watchmen in the citadel,	9 sols.

For the beadles,	14 shillings.
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And twelve wagon loads of fuel were used in the burning.* This record speaks for itself; I cannot find language adequately to comment upon it.

How many were thus put to death can never be told. There is much doubtless, yet to be revealed from the study of old records in Europe which will make the history more complete. In the small province of the Tyrol one thousand were put to death in four years. This is at the rate of two hundred and fifty per year in one little province, whereas, during the whole reign of her who is called “bloody Mary,” and in all England, only two hundred and sixty-four suffered death. Six hundred were slain at Ensisheim; six hundred at Brixen; seventy-three at Lintz; twenty at Rothenburg; sixty-eight at Katzbuhel; thirty-nine at Salzburg; seventy-two within five years at Antwerp; three hundred and fifty at Alzey, between a hundred and fifty and two hundred in the Palatinate, another small province, etc., etc. The records speak of thousands upon thousands all over Germany, Austria, Holland, Prussia, Switzerland and other coun-

*Armitage, Hist. of Bap., p. 312.

tries. The official report of the Venetian ambassador to the court of Charles V in 1546 says that "In Holland and Friesland more than thirty thousand persons have suffered death at the hands of justice for Anabaptist errors." This is the language of a Roman Catholic of course, and so he calls their martyrdom for repudiation of Papal abominations "suffering death at the hands of justice." Of the seventy thousand already mentioned in Moravia we can not tell how many were put to death and how many were driven out, but, ruined by foreign invasions, hunted by the Jesuits, they were pursued until there were none remaining.

Catholics persecuted Lutherans and Lutherans persecuted Catholics in turn, but both together wreaked their vengeance on the poor Baptists; and when at any lull in the tempest the hand of persecution was lifted and favors were granted to dissenting bodies, those *who denied the validity of infant baptism* were specifically excepted.

How shall we explain this persistent persecution, especially when we know by many indications that they were a peaceable, pure, God-fearing people? So true was this that their very piety was a means of pointing them out to their persecutors. Was anyone observed at prayer? He was an Anabaptist. Did anyone offer thanks before eating? He must be an Anabaptist. Did he refuse to curse and swear and even to become angry? He was surely an Anabaptist. A letter written in these times says:—"If anyone will speak for God, for a christian life, against the ungodliness of the times, he must be regarded as a most wicked Anabaptist, and

many think they cannot otherwise escape this brand than by frequent revellings. For to this pass has your evangelic freedom brought the world, that every one earnestly striving to reform their lives, who will not wallow with the drunken swine, that is, live unchastely, must be an Anabaptist.”*

The persecutions were due to several things, and chiefly to the fear that the existing order of things would be overturned by the new doctrines. As of old and ever, these chief priests and Pharisees feared the loss of their prestige and power and desired to continue their monopoly of religious prerogatives. But many doubtless were sincere in their alarm. Knowing nothing of the experience of a real spiritual regeneration, they believed the church in which they had been trained to be the only true church and to offer the only salvation, and it seemed to them that the church of God was being torn to pieces by these heretics. And again, the Anabaptist doctrine that a christian should not “bear the sword,” that is, be a magistrate to rule and judge his brethren, seemed to them to be a wild and dangerous socialism, subversive of all law and order. The Anabaptists looked upon the magistrates around them and saw only those who were cruel and unjust and used their power for oppression and persecution. Magistracy was to them synonymous with wickedness and oppression and they said, the christian ought not to be a magistrate; the christian should suffer wrong rather than do wrong. But to those who could not appreciate this truly Christ-like acceptance of the

*Quoted in Dollinger's Reformation, I. 65.

gospel teaching, their position seemed like a denial of all properly constituted authority, and they looked upon them as anarchists and charged them with all the wild and wicked schemes with which we charge the anarchists of today.

But all this does not by any means fully explain it. It does not explain the vindictive meanness of their treatment, the intentional and shameless exposure of women during torture or at their death, the tortures of the pincers and the rack before their execution, the mean vilification of them both living and dead, the calloused obtuseness to the force of their arguments and their uniform condemnation in spite of reasonings, protests and denials; for there was never but one ending in their trials. They were hated, simply hated for their purity of life and for the necessary exposure by contrast of the false religious life and teaching of their persecutors. Their life and teaching was of necessity a continual condemnation of the false christianity of Catholic and Lutheran and condemnation of self, whether just or not, is the last thing a man will submit to. If they were right others were wrong and their very existence as Baptists contained a logical force which was resented just as it is today. If they were simply regarded as dangerous people whose extermination was a necessity, why not kill them off as quickly and painlessly as possible, and so let them go without the abominable tortures which only hate could invent or permit? No! the circumstances of their taking off showed a vindictive hatred which was felt and voiced even by as good a man as Zwingli in that famous cold-

blooded sentence of his, more terse in the Latin than it can be made in English, "*Qui iterum mergit, mergatur;*" "He who a second time immerses, let him be immersed," that is, drowned.

There was not a Reformer of any prominence who did not stain his hands with the blood of his Baptist brethren; Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Bucer, Bullinger, Calvin, Knox, Cramner, Latimer, Ridley, and many others, who endorsed these cruelties and in the face of whose opposition they would not have been committed. Some of these in turn were burned at the stake themselves, in the carrying out by the Romanists against them of the same line of argument which themselves employed against the Baptists. When defending themselves they claimed the rights of conscience and denied the right of others to persecute, but when opposing Baptists, urged the necessity of the extinction of heresy even by putting heretics to death. They could not see that they themselves were also heretics, and that others had just as good a right to differ from them as they had to differ from the Catholics.

But this brief recital has given us only the merest scraps and hints of suffering. Fill out for yourself the particulars and consider how much suffering of every kind was involved; homes broken up and fathers murdered; the tears and fears of orphaned children left to the tender mercies of their enemies; the struggles of widowed mothers to find bread for their fatherless children; the hardships of families driven out from their homes and despoiled of all their possessions to find food among strangers or starve; and with all this

the constant thought of the galling injustice of it all and of the ill will and contempt which they must bear, which was only the product of prejudice and superstition and ignorance. The cool calculation of cruelty which they suffered was infamous. Communities were driven out just before the harvest time, when there would be no possible chance to raise another crop with which to feed themselves, and when the fruits of their year of toil would fall into the hands of their persecutors. Nor were they even suffered to depart voluntarily in peace though empty handed. Witness this instance among many:—"In a mountainous district of Switzerland a numerous body of Baptists were visited by a friend from Moravia who persuaded them to migrate to his country, where means of living were more abundant and they would be beyond the reach of their persecutors. They disposed of their possessions and set forth upon their long journey. But in a strange land on the way their enemies overtook them. All the men were beheaded, the women drowned, their property and their little ones carried off."* They were even forbidden by Philip II to change their place of abode lest they should seek another habitation and so escape with their lives. What a world of pathos there is in the words of Menno Simon: "What misery and anxiety have I felt in the deadly perils of persecution for my poor sick wife and little children. While others lie on soft beds and cushions, we must often creep away into secret corners. While others engage in festivities to the music of the fife and of the trumpet, we must look around whenever

*Heroes and Hierarchs, p. 103.

a dog barks, fearing the spies are on our track." What a revelation of heartache in these words of Bunyan: "The parting from my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of my flesh off my bones . . . especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had beside. I was as a man who was pulling down his house upon the head of his wife and children. Yet, thought I, I must do it, I must do it." Very truly and tersely says Dr. Bitting, "Through long centuries of anguish and conflict Baptists have toiled, at every tread detailing their martyrs to dungeon and to death, and faltering not until victory dawned. With a welcome to every living soul to share the sweet results of their conflicts, they returned to build their waste places and to enlarge their borders, only to find their deeds denied or forgotten, their history calumniated, their very name a target for reproach and they only called bigots."*

In England and America the story is less awful; yet in England in 1535 fourteen Dutch Anabaptists were burned alive, two of them in London, the others being scattered in various towns, doubtless as a warning to others. In 1538 six more were burned at the stake. In 1539 a body of thirty-one were driven out and fled to Holland where they were beheaded. In 1575 two were burned alive. Twenty-six were thus martyred in a few years in different places, but this is only the beginning of the list of English Baptist martyrs. We have no records of an Inquisition in England to furnish information as to those who were put to death

*Religious Liberty and the Baptists, p. 17.

or died in prison, else the list would be very much extended. Of this the statement of Orchard may be taken as an indication, who says, that "the computation of those who suffered for non-conformity between the restoration and the revolution amounted to seventy thousand families ruined and eight thousand persons destroyed, though the calculation was not finished. The property of which they were plundered, consisting of money and estates, is said to have amounted to twelve or fourteen millions"—of pounds, which would be from sixty to seventy millions of dollars. A large part of these were Baptists. On the eleventh of April, 1611, Edward Wightman gave up his life at the stake, and thus was closed by a Baptist the long list of English martyrs which had been begun two hundred and eleven years before by the burning of another Baptist, William Sawtry. But fines, disabilities and imprisonment followed them, however, until the Act of Toleration in 1689 when active persecution ceased.

Yet not even now are Baptists or other dissenters on an equality with those who belong to the state church, as they are still shut out from various positions and advantages and are still taxed for the support of a clergy which knows little of the gospel and is often of the "sporting" class if not positively immoral. So great a Baptist as Charles Spurgeon was obliged to the day of his death to pay taxes for the support of Episcopal ministers, and the younger brother of our own Dr. Williams,* a Baptist deacon in Wales, and whose father was also a Baptist deacon, is compelled to pay more

*Dr. O. A. Williams, District Secretary of the American Baptist Home Mission Society.

than one hundred dollars every year for the same purpose, while after doing this he can not pay one quarter of that sum for the support of his own pastor. If he did not pay it the officers would seize his cattle and his teams and his crops and sell them from him. The records of English Baptist history are meager and we are not able to give with any fulness either the story of their successes or their sufferings.

At the time of the settlement of America the age of bloody religious persecutions was passing away, and we find no record that any Baptist in America was put to death for his opinions, except it may be as a result of exposure in imprisonment in cold jails and other like hardships. Jails and prisons in those days were miserable affairs and from this exposure some did die, as really martyrs as if they had been beheaded. Yet they were banished, they were whipped, they were stoned, they were hunted with dogs, they were disfranchised, they were robbed of their homes and their living, for preaching, for baptizing, for observing together the Lord's Supper, for refusing to have their babies sprinkled, for going out of church when other people had their babies sprinkled, for refusing to attend the preaching of unconverted ministers, and even for meeting together privately to pray. Everywhere they were taxed for the support of the state churches or "standing order," and when they refused to pay such taxes on the ground that it was recognizing man's authority to dictate in matters which pertain only to God, their property was taken by force and sold, often for a mere fraction of its value. This, of course, was

less grievous than to be beheaded or burned at the stake, yet in those days of poverty it was sufficiently galling and the cause of much hardship and suffering. Men sometimes rave and swear even now when compelled to pay assessments upon their property for improvements which they do not desire and for which they can not afford to pay, and it is no matter for complacency even for a christian man to have his last cow or his team or his home sold perforce by the sheriff, and the money given to a man in whom he has no confidence either as a man or as a christian minister, and who is moreover, the representative of a hateful religious oppression.

The story of the banishment of Roger Williams in October, 1635, and his consequent sufferings is one with which we may all be supposed to be familiar, and there is not time to recount it here save to say that the main opinion for which he was banished, namely, that the magistrate has no right to punish men for a breach of those commandments which concern the duties of men to God only, is now a cardinal principle in the creed of every true American.

The shameful whipping of Obadiah Holmes in Boston in 1651, for quiet worship in a private house and because he "did baptize such as were baptized before," is well known; but it is not so well known that John Spur and John Hazle were each sentenced to ten lashes or the payment of forty shillings for simply taking Holmes by the hand with a "Blessed be God," as he was led from the whipping post. Friends paid their fine without their consent. Hazle was sixty years old and quite infirm, and had come more than fifty miles to comfort

his old friend in prison. He died on the way before reaching home again. Thirteen persons suffered in one way or another for expressing sympathy with Holmes.

In Boston May 7th, 1668, brethren Thomas Gould, William Turner and John Farnum were banished for holding Baptist views, but they refused to go and were therefore imprisoned. After four months a petition signed by sixty-five persons of standing was received by the court for their relief, but so far was it from accomplishing its object that the signers were severely reprimanded by the court and fined for their humanity. March 6th, 1680, the Baptist meeting house in Boston was nailed up by the marshall and the people held their service in the yard, "Itt being a cold wind yt day butt through grace none received any harm." The church record says, "Butt to retorne our Dores being nayled up we provided A shedd which we made Against ye howse with bords, butt coming ye next lords day expecting to meete under our shedd, we found our dores sett open & consulting by ourselves whether to goe in, we considered the Court had not donn itt legally Acting by noe law," so they went in and worshipped.

Not alone in Massachusetts was there persecution but in some of the other colonies as well, and the severest of all and the longest continued struggle was in Virginia. Here the culmination of oppressive laws was reached in 1611, when it was required that every one go to an Episcopal minister and give an account of his views. If he refused to go he was to be whipped. If he then refused to go he was to be whipped twice, and if he still refused, he was to be whipped every day until he

did go. How galling such a provision was and how belittling to one's self respect, perhaps an independent and self respecting Baptist can understand better than any one else. Many ministers in Virginia were arrested and imprisoned, the manner of it adding indignity to the arrest itself. They were sometimes dragged from the platform while preaching or even while praying and taken away to be imprisoned or fined or publicly whipped. There appear among those thus treated the names of the three Craigs, Waller, Webber, Childs, Anthony, Eastin, Weatherford, Tanner, Walker, Ware, Maxfield, Loyal, Greenwood, Young and a host of others. Joseph Ware was hunted with dogs. James Ware and James Pitman were imprisoned for having preaching in their houses. John Koons, Thomas Wafford and others carried the scars of their whippings to their graves. James Ireland was imprisoned in Culpepper jail where powder was put under him to blow him up, brimstone was burned to suffocate him and poison administered to kill him; but he lived to preach the gospel a number of years more and win many souls. On the very site of that Culpepper jail stands today a Baptist church wherein more than two hundred members regularly worship.

In New York, in Connecticut, in South Carolina and in other colonies Baptists were harassed to a less degree. They were taxed as others for the support of Episcopal or Congregational ministers and for these taxes their property and their homesteads were taken away. They were also imprisoned on various charges and fined, for there were many ways of harassing Baptists even when

they could not be directly persecuted for their opinions. These arrests were so timed in many cases as to work the most discomfort possible. The mother of Isaac Backus, the first American Baptist historian, for example, a widow fifty-four years old, was arrested at nine o'clock at night, October 15th, 1752, and with several others taken seventeen miles to jail in a cold October rain, where she was kept thirteen days until her fine was paid by some person unknown. There is in my own church a very intelligent and faithful old lady whose grandfather's grandfather, an old man of eighty years, was arrested at the same time of night and while preparing for bed. He was taken away without being allowed to resume the clothing he had laid off, and kept for some time in a cold jail without fire or bed-clothes. It was evidently the hope of his captors that the exposure would kill him but his physical system, like his faith, was of too rugged a nature to be easily destroyed. The charges against him were of a trumped up character while his real crime was that he was too outspoken a Baptist.*

But when we have given the record of the imprisonments and martyrdoms of our ancestors in the faith we have not by any means told all the story of indignities and sufferings. There was much that can not be put on record and yet, perhaps, was not less hard to bear sometimes than actual suffering: the contemptuous treatment of their appeals and petitions, while others were respectfully listened to; the mean spitefulness

*It is a matter of interest to me that in every audience that has heard these lectures someone has afterwards come to me with a relation of similar experiences in their own family or family line.

which was shown them by officers, courts and people alike; the way in which laws were devised to harass them and the unfairness with which other laws were interpreted when applied to them; the bitter prejudice they met and the misconstructions put upon their motives; the scorn of those who were far beneath them in integrity of character and spiritual strength; all these things and many more made their lives a daily trial. To bear all this and go right on, doing that which was right in the sight of God and trusting Him to vindicate their cause in his own time, bearing patiently what they must and not answering scorn with hatred—that is heroism; a heroism we cannot afford, for our own benefit, to overlook or forget.

As we read this long and distressing story of how an innocent and faithful people have been hounded and murdered, harassed and hated because they had firm convictions as to the truth of Christ and faithfully followed them, is it any wonder to us that Baptists have struggled and plead, always and everywhere, for religious liberty, and that they have been the foremost opposers of every form of church oppression and of that union of church and state which makes such oppression possible?

The question cannot fail to present itself, was it worth while to suffer thus for these religious opinions? Why be so stubborn for a principle? Would it not have been better to lay aside their convictions and save themselves this distress? Why did they endure such things? They suffered these things because they had *consciences*, and we cannot too much honor those who

hold to *principle* rather than policy. Because their opinions were not opinions merely, but convictions as to God's own truth which no man is at liberty to disregard. Because they knew that God had spoken and they dare not disobey his word. They suffered for the same reason that so many now stand apart from other professed christians to be misjudged and sneered at as self-righteous and narrow minded; because they would have no fellowship with what they knew was contrary to God's word and subversive of the vital principles of christianity.

They suffered *because they were converted men and women*. They knew what spiritual experience of salvation is and valued the presence of Jesus in their souls more than life itself. They could not go back or deny the truth. They suffered because they loved their families and longed for their salvation. The prohibition of their activities was a prohibition of salvation to their loved ones, for they knew that they were mistaught and deluded by their own ministers—blind leaders of the blind—and they *must* preach to them and they must pray for them, and for this multitudes suffered and multitudes died. Mark this well, that the opposition to the Baptists was an opposition to the preaching of the true principles of the gospel, by which alone man can be saved. They knew that men had no right to deny them the right to obey God and teach others to obey him, and do it, too, in the name of religion; had no right to kill and plunder and force and tax for matters in which it is the right of God alone to judge, and they would not give up a true principle for a false one. They were not cranks or

fanatics, nor were they merely stubborn. They were the best and purest of the men and women of their time and we need not sneer at them, especially when we remember that if they had not resisted the corrupted christianity of their day and taught a better, no other would have been known. Men in their day drowned and burned heretics and "thought that they offered service unto God," and but for their sufferings and teaching would be doing it yet, and we ourselves, instead of rejoicing in the free grace and presence of Jesus Christ, would have been still under the blighting and damning influence of a priestly church.

But why did men inflict such things upon their fellow men,—pure minded people too, and innocent of any crime? Why should christians persecute christians? Because they were *not* christians. They were of a church which was no true church and recipients of a salvation which saves nobody, and yet regarded themselves as the true and only church of Christ. The cruelty of their work, the treachery and injustice to which they descended to gain their ends is witness against them that they knew nothing of Christ. Their salvation was only one of rites and ceremonies and they had no comprehension of personal faith, personal obedience and personal responsibility to a personal Saviour. A late writer well says, "To say the *church* did it is blasphemy. It was the work of fiends incarnate." There were some, however, whose noble service and pure lives make us hesitate to affirm that they were not christians, who yet endorsed and encouraged these persecutions and without whose consenting influence they would not have

been carried on. Of such we can only say that they could not trust the power of the truth but must try to bolster it up by force. They could not trust the consciences of men to make them accept the truth when it was seen, nor could they trust God to watch over his own work and vindicate his own way. But more than all, they did not comprehend that there might be realms of truth where they had not traveled nor admit the possibility that their victims might be right and they themselves mistaken; and yet we know that they were mistaken—awfully mistaken.

There was yet another motive which worked mightily in this direction, and that was the priestly instinct that ever seeks to thrust itself into power and influence and is exceedingly jealous of whatever interferes; that same power which brought Jesus himself to the cross. It was the ambition for church power, which is still such a mighty motive in the world and leads to many sadly unchristian things. It was not a conviction that the gospel would not be taught and souls would not be saved, if these heretics had their way, that led to their persecution, but an alarm lest the church should be shorn of her power and her priests be left without a following and so without influence and glory.

But does not this record give us more of an appreciation of our christian liberty, and does it not inspire us to more of a spirit of loyalty to the truth and resistance to error, and to a determination that we will be worthy successors of those who fought the good fight and kept the faith, until we also shall receive the crown? Let us never be known as degenerate children of a noble ancestry.

*"He hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening
of the prison to them that are bound."*

*"For freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast,
therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of
bondage."*

IV.

BAPTIST INFLUENCE ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

The natural condition of barbarism and heathenism is tyranny; we see that illustrated everywhere in the heathen world of today as in the days past. Barbarism is the reign of brute force unguided by right moral principles or rules of justice, and barbarism and heathenism go together. The rule of heathenism has always been an irresponsible monarchy, which is tyranny, and even when in brilliant periods as in Greece and Rome there has been something like popular government, it has sunken back again into monarchy. The history of christianity has been a history of civilization; and the history of civilization has been the history of peoples struggling for their natural rights against ancient oppressions, hereditary privileges and the time honored usurpation by a few or by an individual of the prerogatives that belong to all alike; and so through this struggle have grown up governments by the people and for the people, instead of for the few and by the few. The people have won their rights only after a long conflict and many defeats, as witness the growth of

liberty and constitutional government in England and in France, and the struggle now going on in Germany and Russia.

Again, the gospel has always been the great agent and basis of liberty wherever the gospel has been preached in its truth and purity. A study of modern missions in connection with this thought is most interesting; to see how the entrance of the gospel into heathen nations has broken up ancient and cruel despotisms and lifted the people up into civil liberty. The gospel emphasizes the dignity of man as an individual, a redeemed soul, of infinite worth in the sight of God, of dignity and importance because capable of becoming a child of God, and therefore possessing individual responsibility and individual rights. Thus the man is brought into a consciousness of himself and into rebellion against the usurpation of unjust authority, and in the end, out from under the dominion of tyranny into the enjoyment of popular rights. So wherever the gospel goes liberty and a just government follow.

It might be expected therefore, that that church which has best preserved the purity of the New Testament teaching would not be without its influence on civil government; that its influence would be on the side of the largest and truest liberty, and just so we find it. A state church has never been a pure church, and a state church has never been the friend of liberty. In the nature of the case it cannot be. It derives its prestige and power from the favor of government, and its privileged priests have the same motive for preserving their authority over the people that the privileged

ruler has, and their sympathies in every struggle will be with him. Always the dissenting churches have been those that have been friendly to the people and foremost in the struggle for popular rights; and among these, that church which has been the farthest from the established form and nearest to the Apostolic pattern has been the very foremost.

Moreover the church is always behind the government and profoundly influencing it, in spirit as well as form, and has been from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the present. Whether in England or America, in Spain, Mexico or Switzerland, the influence of prevailing religious ideas is seen in government. For the religious feeling is deepest of all feelings and religious ideas run through all a man's activities and their tone and color are seen in all his life. Men are first moved in their religious nature and the ideas thus received work out into their due fruitage in social life and civil life. A revolution in church therefore, means, sooner or later, a revolution in state; a revolution in religion means a revolution in government.

The struggle for *religious* liberty therefore, has had a large part in history and has been at the bottom of many a political movement. Religious liberty has carried with it civil liberty, and while men have been struggling for liberty to worship God they have also, though perhaps unwittingly, been working out a larger liberty for all mankind. To whom then, is due the present victory and largeness of liberty in which we stand? Whose are the slain who fell in the battle and whose were the wounds and the groans, the toil and the

weariness and whose should be the crown?

There is a very natural disposition to think that what we ourselves believe we and our fathers have always believed, and that the things we now hold are the things that our fathers fought for. Every kind of a belief seeks to prove for itself an antiquity, and every kind of a society seeks to show that the benefits men enjoy are the result of its ancient influence; and so those in these days who were not in the battle are claiming the victory, nay, even those who fought against the now triumphant truth. Hence it comes to pass that those principles which for centuries were peculiar to the Baptists, and which in the early days no others contended for, are now largely adopted by those who are scarcely willing to admit that they have not always held them, and what is due to their long and painful struggle is now claimed by others as their own victory. I do not wish in the least to disparage others nor to glorify ourselves, and have no sympathy at all with the feeling that because we are *we* therefore we are, and of right ought to be, the people; but we have been so often disparaged and our achievements so often appropriated by others that it is due to ourselves that a just statement be made.

We are not now alone in our insistence that the state and the church are separate and distinct, and that neither the church should interfere in political matters nor the state seek to prescribe rules for the church. We are now, in other words, no more loyal to the idea of complete religious liberty than those of other denominations whose spiritual ancestors did not see these things thus.

An attempt by court or government to establish one church above another or to hinder anyone from adopting such forms of religious belief or practice as he might choose would raise a universal outcry and would be no more quickly resented by Baptists than by Episcopalians, Presbyterians or Congregationalists. But it was not always so.

Let it not be thought that we claim for ourselves the entire credit of human freedom, or claim that Baptists have been the sole cause of the liberties we enjoy. Every movement of religious revival and reform has been a movement towards at least partial liberty, and besides the religious influence that has been at work, there is in the heart of every man a feeling of natural right which has sought to gain its own. Some things, however, are true, and some things are due to Baptist principles in the past and in the present, and these things we will try to indicate.

First then, *Baptists were the first to declare the doctrine of complete religious liberty and have always been the leaders in the struggle for its attainment*, and to them more than to any other body is due the credit of its final attainment. Perhaps there was a reason for this. They were more persecuted than any others and therefore more longed for peace and liberty. They were still oppressed when others had rest and therefore strove for it still when others were satisfied. But more than all, they had a principle of liberty which did not find satisfaction in anything less than complete freedom, and which would not rest until the last possible weapon of oppression was destroyed, namely, that man, in matters

of religion, is responsible only to God. This thought was fundamental with them and would not let them rest under any compromise or mere toleration. There were others who joined in the struggle, such as the Quakers, and there were those who at different times sought and obtained a partial freedom for *themselves*, but they were the first and the chief and the only body who always and everywhere have stood for complete liberty for *all* men. This spirit of liberty they have also carried out among themselves, and there is no denomination where there is more complete liberty of thought and action, limited only by the requirements of the divine Word, than among them.

That Baptists were the first to plead for equal rights and full religious liberty for all men there is universal testimony among candid writers. These are the words of Bancroft the historian: "The Baptist party, *whose trophy from the first was freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind*, was trodden under foot with foul reproaches and most arrogant scorn, and its history is written in the blood of the German peasantry; but its principles, safe in their immortality, escaped with Roger Williams to Providence, and his colony is the witness that naturally the paths of the Baptists are the paths of freedom."* Macaulay remarks that Bossuet was able to say "we fear with too much truth, that on one point all christians had long been unanimous—the right of the civil government to propagate the truth by the sword: that even heretics had been orthodox as to this right, and that the Anabaptists and Socinians were

*Hist. U. S., Boston, 1855, II, 66-7.

the first who called it in question." * Schaff, in his "Progress of Religious Freedom," says: "Baptists and Quakers alone were consistent advocates of universal toleration and put it into their creeds." Judge Durfee, writing of Roger Williams, says: "The future of Rhode Island, and to some extent the future of the world, hung suspended on the issue of the struggle. It was a pivotal transaction in universal history. His doctrine was that every man has a natural right to follow the dictates of his conscience as long as he keeps the civil peace; a right which the state can neither give nor take away nor control, even with the consent of the individual, since no man can absolve himself from fealty to his own conscience. The right has never been expressed with more completeness. This is his glory, that *he, first among men, made it a living element of the state*, turning it from thought to fact, giving it a corporate existence in which it could perpetuate and practically approve itself." Pastors of other denominations sometimes give the same testimony, as when Rev. Dr. Leonard Swain, pastor of the Central Congregational church of Providence, Rhode Island, said at the centennial of the Warren Association in September, 1867, "You Baptists fought the battle of religious liberty and we all enjoy the fruits of the victory."

Every Baptist martyr has died proclaiming this doctrine; every Baptist preacher and writer has set it forth; many confessions of faith have specifically declared it and denied to the civil power any authority whatever to compel, restrain or punish in matters of

*See Bossuet, Vol. X, p. 356

religion. The treatises, discussions, remonstrances and appeals upon this topic have been innumerable.

The *first confession of faith to declare the doctrine of full religious liberty* was that of the Swiss Anabaptists in the year 1527. This confession makes a clear distinction between the temporal authority and the spiritual and entirely disclaims the use of the temporal in the church. It says: "In law the sword is ordained over the wicked for punishment and death, and the civil power is ordained to use it. But in the perfection of Christ, excommunication is pronounced only for warning and for exclusion of him who has sinned, *without death of the flesh*, only by warning and the command not to sin again." It has been generally supposed that its author was Michael Sattler, who was burned at the stake three months later. The Confession of certain English Anabaptists of 1611 says: "We believe that the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion or doctrine, but to leave the christian religion free to every man's conscience, and to handle only civil transgressions, injuries and wrongs of man against man, in murder, adultery, theft etc., for Christ only is the King and Lawgiver of the church and conscience."* The confessions of 1643 and 1660 and others declare at great length the duty of obedience to civil magistrates in civil things, but, "In case the civil power do, or shall at any time impose things about matters of religion, which we, through conscience to God, cannot actually obey; then . . . we will not yield,

*History Anti-Pedobaptism, p. 392.

nor in such cases in the least actually obey them; yet humbly purposing, in the Lord's strength, patiently to suffer whatsoever shall be inflicted upon us for our conscionable forbearance."* Compare with this the language of other confessions of about the same date as, for example, the Westminster Confession, Chapter XX: "And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices as are contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of christianity, whether concerning faith, worship or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions as, either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may be lawfully called to account and proceeded against by the censures of the church, *and by the power of the civil magistrate.*"† Underhill, in his "Struggles and Triumphs of Religious Liberty," says: "There is not a confession nor a creed framed by any of the Reformers which does not give to the magistrate a coercive power in religion, and almost every one at the same time curses the resisting Baptists." Lecky says in his "History of Rationalism," "Persecution in the sixteenth century was a distinct and definite doctrine, digested into elaborate treatises, indissolubly connected with a large portion of the received theology, developed by most enlightened theologians and enforced against most inoffensive sects." We have already seen that there was not a reformer of any eminence who did not uphold the persecution of those whom they called

*Confession of 1660. †The Confession now in use omits the last clause.

heretics and make himself responsible for it.

The *first modern treatises on religious liberty* were written by Baptists. Hubmeyer had written a powerful plea for religious liberty in "Heretics and their Burners" about the year 1525, but the work has perished. The first treatise in English was by Leonard Busher in 1614, entitled "Religion's Peace, or a Plea for Liberty of Conscience." It pleads "that it may be lawful for every person or persons, yea, Jews, Turks, Pagans and Papists, to write, dispute, confer and reason, print and publish any matter touching any religion either for or against whomsoever;" language which for breadth of liberality cannot be surpassed even in these days. In 1615 appeared another: "Persecution for Religion Judged and condemned, by Christ's Unworthy Witnesses, His Majesty's Faithful Subjects, Commonly, but most Falsely called Anabaptists." It says: "Earthly authority belongeth to earthly kings, but spiritual authority belongeth to that one spiritual King who is King of Kings." In 1620 appeared "A most humble Supplication of Many of the King's Majesty's Loyal Subjects," etc., which was written by a prisoner in Newgate prison. It was written in milk upon the paper stoppers of the bottles in which the milk was furnished and these fragments of writing were then arranged by the friends of the prisoners and published, and they show no small ability on the part of their author. Indeed, considering the circumstances of the writer the language used and the quotations made are very remarkable. It is a direct and pointed argument, quoting from the king's own words, the spirit of which

can be judged from the following words in the conclusion: "You may make and mend your own laws and be judge and punisher of the transgressors thereof; but you cannot make or mend God's laws, they are perfect already. You may not add nor diminish, nor be judge or monarch of his church, that is Christ's right, he left neither you nor any mortal man his deputy, but only the Holy Ghost, as your highness acknowledgeth." This treatise, as Roger Williams said, was "written in milk and answered in blood." In 1642 Busher's treatise was reprinted. In 1647 appeared one by Thomas Richardson; in 1660, one by prisoners in Maidstone jail; in 1662 "Zion's Groans for her Distressed," by a committee of London Baptists; and in 1659 had appeared Milton's "Treatise of the Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes, showing that it is not lawful for any human power on earth to compel in matters of religion." In those days no others taught the doctrine of full religious liberty. No writings can be adduced from that early time, except from Baptist authors, which taught that the right to worship God according to the dictates of one's own conscience was a natural right, belonging to every man.

The first treatise on religious liberty by an American author was by Roger Williams in 1644. Mr. Hall, a congregational minister at Roxbury, had sent the treatise written in Newgate to Mr. John Cotton, famous in New England history, and his reply to that was by some one published and a copy of it came to Mr. Williams, who answered it in a famous treatise entitled "The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience Discussed." Cotton replied in a treatise entitled "The

Bloudy Tenent Washed and made White in the blood of the Lambe." Williams again answered in "The Bloody Tenent yet more Bloody by Mr. Cotton's Endeavour to wash it white in the blood of the Lambe etc." This discussion created great interest, and the arguments of Mr. Williams in contrast with the rather choleric utterances of Mr. Cotton were of telling effect. Thus was the gauntlet thrown down and the controversy begun which was only to end with the complete vindication of these principles and the destruction of religious tyranny in America.

The first government ever organized on the basis of complete religious liberty, and the first in which that principle was ever fully recognized, was the Baptist government of Rhode Island. Here in their fundamental law it was declared that "No person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be in any way molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question for any difference of opinion in matters of religion which do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony; but that all and every person or persons, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his and their judgment and consciences in matters of religious concernment, they behaving themselves peaceably and quietly and not using this liberty to licentiousness and profaneness, nor to the civil injury or outward disturbance of others." This was no mere matter of form, for we find that a man was actually punished, for the first time in the history of the world perhaps, for interfering with another in religious matters. One Joshua Verin attempted to

compel his wife to give up her religion and keep away from religious meetings, using abusive violence for this end, and the court decreed that he "for breach of covenant in restraining liberty of conscience shall be withheld from voting till he declare the contrary!" Moreover it was here in Rhode Island that, long before the days of Abraham Lincoln, his famous declaration "a government of the people, by the people and for the people" was for the first time made a reality. It was Roger Williams who first declared the principle of democracy which is the very foundation of our American government, that the sovereign power of government is in the *people* and in *all* the people. This principle was brought out in his opposition to those laws of Massachusetts which denied the franchise and the privileges of office to all who were not members of the church, and to the giving away by kings and rulers, through patents and monopolies, of lands and privileges which did not belong to them but to the people. Thus in the first Baptist state was embodied that idea which was to rule the nation and is yet to rule the world.

The *first college to open its doors to all alike* and offer its privileges and honors to every person without any religious test or requirement was the first college founded by Baptists, namely, Rhode Island College, now called Brown University, at Providence. All the universities of the old world were founded and controlled by state churches down to the middle of the last century and from them all dissenters were of course, excluded. Not all of them even yet are open to all alike. The first college to be founded in this country was Harvard

and its first President, Henry Dunster, after years of most distinguished service, during which he brought it up from an academy of uncertain prospects to a recognized college, was driven from the presidency because he had declared against infant baptism in a public sermon (for which he was indicted by the grand jury and convicted), and for refusing to have his own infant child baptized, for which he was a second time indicted and punished. A hundred years after this Yale College expelled students for choosing to worship with Separatists. In contrast to this, note the language of the charter of the first Baptist college in this country: "Into this liberal and catholic institution shall never be admitted any religious tests. But on the contrary all the members hereof shall enjoy free, absolute, and uninterrupted liberty of conscience, and the places of professors, tutors and all other officers, the President alone excepted, shall be free and open for all denominations of Protestants, and the youth of all religious denominations shall and may be admitted to the equal advantages, emoluments and honors of the college or university . . . and the sectarian differences shall not make any part of the public and classical instruction." The early Baptist ministers of this country were sneered at as illiterate ignoramuses, but they were shut out from schools of higher learning by religious tests to which they could not subscribe, and it was only with great difficulty that they secured one of their own. In no colony except Rhode Island could Baptists at that time have secured a charter for a college or a school of any kind.

Secondly: *Baptists were the first, and for centuries the only ones who grasped the idea of FULL religious liberty*; that is, not mere toleration but actual liberty, for toleration is one thing and liberty is quite another. This distinction is not always clearly made and therefore much confusion on this point has resulted and many false claims have been made. Toleration is permission but liberty is exercise of absolute right, which asks no permission and refuses to receive any. Religious toleration says, "I grant you the privilege of worshiping as you may choose;" but the very bestowment of a privilege implies the right to revoke that action and withdraw what has been bestowed, and liberty which is held only at the will of a master is no liberty at all. Religious liberty says, "Your choice of worship is no matter of mine; it is a thing which belongs to you by natural right; a privilege which I can neither give nor take away." Baptists would not be *tolerated*, would not accept as a privilege what they claimed as a natural right, and just upon their making of this distinction hangs all that religious freedom which is so precious to us.

And again a distinction is to be made in that while others demanded liberty for themselves, Baptists demanded it for all and were willing to grant to others also what they desired for themselves. We have already seen how the Reformers urged their right to think for themselves when contending with the Papal power, and argued nobly for immunity from persecution, and yet when they came into power, these very same men turned to persecute those who differed from

them. The Puritans and Pilgrims likewise exiled themselves from home and native land in order to find freedom to worship God, and yet they, having come part way out of Papal corruptions and old world tyranny, were not willing to tolerate those who were minded to come all the way out. Baptists, on the other hand, both in theory and in practice, have granted to other men the right to hold and exercise whatever opinions they might choose, even though those opinions might seem to them infidel and destructive, and have defended them in that liberty, allowing only reasoning and persuasion as the weapons to be used against them.

The claim of leadership in the struggle for religious liberty has been made for almost every denomination, partly, perhaps, from a confusion of ideas, partly from a desire to make the best showing possible for one's own people. Episcopacy has made the claim, in spite of Laud and Smithfield, and put forward the treatise on "The Liberty of Prophesying" by Jeremy Taylor in 1647 as being the pioneer in the discussion. It was indeed a noble plea for a churchman in his times to make, but this was not the first by nearly the life time of its author, for Bushner's treatise was published when Taylor was only a year old, and a number of others had also preceded it. Moreover, when examined carefully, it comes far short of the positions taken in them; for Taylor excepts from his toleration those who deny fundamental articles, declares heresy "against an article of the creed" (i. e. an essential), to be "a very grievous crime" and "worse than adultery or murder." He declares that "God hath made religion to grow up with

empire and lean upon the arm of kings and it cannot well go alone;" and that the religion of the Anabaptists is "as much to be rooted out as anything that is the greatest pest and nuisance to the public interest." At the best it is only a plea for toleration, not for full liberty, and besides it was written when he himself was under condemnation by the dominant party; but when he came to power again he found his liberal views somewhat difficult of explanation in view of his practice and the fact that he deposed more than thirty Presbyterian pastors who refused to be episcopally ordained. The scenes of many a martyrdom in the old country and of New York and Virginia in the new, refute this claim.

It has been claimed for Congregationalism, and with more plausibility than for some others, but Obadiah Holmes and Roger Williams and the multitude of suffering Baptists of Massachusetts refute this claim.

It has been claimed for Presbyterianism; and indeed, Presbyterian writings make large claim for Presbyterianism that it has always been the great bulwark of liberty, and that to it the liberties of our own land are most largely due. As far as this country is concerned it is true that Presbyterians have been found, for the most part, on the side of liberty; but it is not true that they were the first to teach these doctrines or that they have taught liberty in its broadest, truest sense. Their history in England and Scotland and on the continent quite refutes their claims. Appeal has been made to their great documents, such as the Scotch League and Covenant, as being milestones on the road to liberty; but this Covenant, which was adopted by the General

Assembly of Scotland, the Westminster Assembly and both houses of Parliament in 1643, was made, not for the securing of complete liberty to all men, but for the unifying and strengthening and enforcement of Presbyterianism. Under it no minister but a Presbyterian could preach, and it bound its signers "that we shall in like manner without respect of persons, endeavor the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, superstition, heresie, schisme, profaneness and whatever shall be found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness," themselves, of course, being the sole judges of what was "contrary to sound doctrine," which is the vice of all such efforts. Because such large claims have been made for them, let me quote somewhat at length from various Presbyterian writings:

Article XXIV of the first Scotch Confession, 1560: "Mairover, to Kings, Princes, Rulers and Magistrates, wee affirme that chieflie and most principallie the conservation and purgation of the Religiouns apperteinis; so that not onlie they are appointed for civill policie bot also for maintenance of the trew Religioun, and for suppressing of Idolatrie and Superstitioun whatsoever," etc.

Second Book of Discipline of the church of Scotland, 1578: "It pertainis to the office of a Christian magistrat to assist and manteine the discipline of the Kirk: and punish them civilly, that will not obey the censure of the same," etc.

John Knox, History of the Reformation in Scotland, pp. 264-5. "In such places I say, it is not only lawful to punish to the death such as labor to subvert the true

religion, but the magistrates and the people are bound to do so unless they will provoke the wrath of God against themselves."

Richard Baxter, "Plain Scripture Proof of Infant Church Membership and Baptism," p. 246, London, 1650: "My judgment in that much disputed point of liberty of Religion I have always freely made known. I abhor unlimited liberty and toleration of all and think myself easily able to prove the wickedness of it."*

Professor A. H. Newman says, "From 1674 onward the Reformed (Calvinistic) church sought persistently to destroy the Mennonites, but they enjoyed the protection of William the Silent and afterwards of Maurice of Nassau. The Synod of Dort in 1574 decided to exhort the government to tolerate no one who would not swear obedience to it, to compel the Mennonites to have their infants baptized, and in case of their refusal to turn them over to the Reformed ministers to be dealt with . . . Though their membership constituted as yet only a small fraction of the population, (one tenth according to some authorities), they sought to secure recognition as the established church of the land with power to coerce dissent." (And in the published report of a disputation), "The preface concludes with an impassioned appeal to the authorities to withdraw all protection from the Anabaptists, whose principles are declared to strike at the root of saving truth and of civil and religious order, and whose doctrine, founded in lying hypocrisy, eats as doth a gangrene." And again, "The most determined efforts on the part of the

*Appendix to Vedder's *Shor History of Baptists*.

Calvinists to crush out the Mennonites by the use of the civil power were continued almost without intermission throughout the seventeenth century. If the Mennonites were not destroyed root and branch . . . it was due to no lack of zeal on the part of the Reformed ministers but rather to their powers of endurance and the restraining influence of the government.’’*

But, strangest of all, the leadership in the struggle for religious liberty has been claimed by the Roman Catholics! That church at whose doors lie the crimes of the Waldensian murders, of St. Bartholomew’s day and of the inquisition! That church which for ages has been drunk with the blood of the saints, and which in our own land today is seeking to undermine our liberties and destroy the bulwarks of our free institutions! Archbishop Hughes wrote in 1852, “The palm of having been the first to practice it (i. e. religious liberty), is due beyond all controversy to the Catholic colony of Maryland.” But the Maryland act of Toleration was not passed until 1649, when Rhode Island was already established, and it provided that blasphemy or denial of the divinity of Christ or the doctrine of the Trinity should be punished with *death*, and “persons using any reproachful word or speeches concerning the Blessed Virgin Mary or the Holy Apostles” should be fined, whipped or imprisoned and if obstinate, banished. Later oppressive laws were also passed, as in 1663 when a fine of a ton of tobacco was decreed upon any who should refuse the baptism of their children.

Pope Gregory XVI in his encyclical letter of 1832

*History of Anti-Pedobaptism, pp. 318-20.

declares "the opinion that for every one whatever is to be claimed and defended the liberty of conscience" to be "a most pestilent error," the "ravings of delirium," and "that pest of all others most to be dreaded in a state," and speaks of "that worst and never enough to be execrated and detestable liberty of the press." Pius IX in his encyclical of 1864 utters similar sentiments. His language is very involved and verbose, but it clearly means that it is impious and absurd to maintain that the civil government ought not to make it a part of its duty to compel its subjects by penalties to observe the true religion; and in his accompanying "Syllabus of Errors" declares it a damnable error "that the church has not the power of availing herself of force or any direct or indirect temporal power."*

One of the principal Roman Catholic organs has said, "Religious liberty, in the sense of liberty possessed by every man to choose his own religion, *is one of the most wicked delusions ever foisted upon this age by the father of all deceit.* Shall I hold out hopes to my erring Protestant brother that I will not meddle with his creed if he will not meddle with mine? Shall I tempt him to forget that *he has no more right to his religious views than he has to my house or my purse or my life blood?* No, Catholicism is the most intolerant of creeds."† With this last statement we shall most certainly agree.

Besides the broad promulgation of principles and the innumerable testimonies through their sufferings in so many places, there are some direct influences of Baptists

*The full text is given in Littel's Living Age, 18th March, 1865.

†Relig. Lib. and Baptists, Dr. C. C. Bitting, p. 36.

upon the struggle for religious liberty which we do well to note. Amid the general intolerance of the sixteenth century, Holland under William of Orange gives the only instance of broad-mindedness in religious matters. In 1572 the continent was ablaze with persecution and the soil of Holland was soaked with the blood of more than fifty thousand martyrs. Henry II of France and Philip II of Spain had compacted to make the Roman Catholic church completely triumphant by putting to death every Protestant in the Netherlands and William had determined to arouse the Protestant population to throw off the Spanish yoke. He had spent his own money, had sold his plate and mortgaged his estates to carry on the war against Spain and was nearly obliged to give up the contest, when an apparently trivial circumstance gave him new courage. He was walking one day near his headquarters in discouragement and anxiety when two strangers approached him and enquired for the Prince. Making himself known, he found that they were two Baptist preachers, John Friedericks and Dick Jans Cortenbosch, who had come to offer their services and enquire what they might do. They explained to him their principles and he told them his need, upon which they promised to solicit money for the cause among their friends and were heartily thanked by the Prince. Many years of persecution had left to the Baptists very little of the world's goods, yet by strenuous exertion and after one collector had lost his life in the effort, they raised and sent in a thousand florins. When nobles and wealthy men were proving selfish and false this material help was of far

more value than it might have seemed, and afterwards when rebuking the authorities at Middleburg for attempted oppression, the Prince praises the Baptists who had brought their contributions at the peril of their lives, and commands that they be let alone. The Mennonites who were a branch of the Anabaptists, contributed liberally to the materials of war although it was against their principles to fight, and often furnished substitutes.

In England under Cromwell the Baptists came grandly to the front to strike for liberty, and they loyally supported him until it was evident that he was going wrong and usurping powers that would only end in irresponsible rule again. Some of his most trusted officers and counselors like General Harrison and Colonel Hutchison were Baptists, and so were very many of the common soldiers of his army.

The American Encyclopedia, Article, "Baptists," says: "In England, from the time of Henry VIII to William III, a full century and a half, the Baptists struggled to gain their footing and to secure liberty of conscience to all. From 1611 they issued appeal after appeal, addressed to the king, the parliament and the people, in behalf of soul liberty, written with a breadth of view and force of argument hardly since exceeded. Yet until the Quakers arose in 1660, the Baptists stood alone in its defense amid universal opposition. In the time of Cromwell they first gained a fair hearing, and under the lead of Milton and Vane would have changed the whole system of church and state but for the treason of Monk. In the time of Charles II the prisons were

filled with their confessors and martyrs, yet their principles gradually gained ground in the public mind and prepared the way for the revolution of 1688. 'The share which the Baptists took' says Dr. Williams, 'in shoring up the fallen liberties of England, and in infusing new vigor and liberality into the constitution of that country is not generally known. Yet to this body English liberty owes a debt it can never acknowledge. Among the Baptists christian freedom found its earliest, its stanchest, its most consistent and its most disinterested champions.' "

But as the most marked development of Baptist strength has been here in America, so here also has been their most marked influence on the civil government. This influence began with Roger Williams and that discussion of principles which led to his exile and the founding of Rhode Island Colony upon principles of absolute soul liberty. "This small territory was settled under circumstances new and peculiar, and here were planted principles as to religious freedom, which at the time, in the fullest and most literal sense of the statement, all the world opposed as visionary in theory, dangerous, disorganizing and impracticable. The system adopted by the founder of this state, on the principles of an unlimited toleration of all the varying creeds of theology, and of the unfettered and unobstructed exercise of all the rites and forms of religion which erring and imperfect mortals might choose to adopt, was treated with ridicule and contempt, with banter and abuse, not only by a pampered priesthood and lordly prelates, but also by the very men who had long been

the victims of ecclesiastical oppression, and who, by the intolerant laws of the old country, had been driven to seek an asylum in these then Western wilds.* But the influence of this little government has been tremendous. Judge Story says, "In the code of laws established by them, we read for the first time since christianity ascended the throne of the Cæsars the declaration that conscience should be free, and that men should not be punished for worshipping God in the way they were persuaded he requires." Senator Anthony said, in a speech delivered upon the occasion of the unveiling of the monument to Roger Williams in the National Capitol, January 9th, 1872, "Religious freedom, which now by general consent underlies the foundation principle of civilized government, was at that time looked upon as a wilder theory than any proposition, moral, political, or religious, that has since engaged the serious attention of mankind. It was regarded as impracticable, disorganizing, impious, and if not utterly subversive of social order, it was not so only because its manifest absurdity would prevent any serious effort to enforce it." And yet Gervinus the German philosophical writer says of Roger Williams in the introduction to his history of the civilization of the nineteenth century, "He formed in Rhode Island a small and new society in which perfect freedom in matters of faith was allowed, and in which the majority ruled in all civil affairs. Here in a little state the fundamental principles of political and ecclesiastical liberty practically prevailed before they were even taught in any of the schools of

*Benedict, Hist. Bap., p. 423.

philosophy in Europe . . . But not only have these ideas and these forms of government maintained themselves here, but precisely from this little state have they extended themselves throughout the United States. They have conquered the aristocratic tendencies in Carolina and New York, the high church in Virginia, the theocracy in Massachusetts and the monarchy in all America. They have given laws to a continent and, formidable through their moral influence they lie at the bottom of all the democratic movements which are now shaking the nations of Europe."

Perhaps the direct influence of Baptists upon the spirit and form of the American government can best be understood by considering several different particulars, such as their organized effort in Massachusetts and Virginia to secure liberty by law, their share in the Revolution, their influence through Jefferson and Madison, and their influence in the adoption of the Constitution of the United States and in securing the First Amendment.

I. The Baptists in New England had suffered much from the tyrannical oppressions of the "Standing Order" as it was called, or in other words the Congregational church, which was established and upheld by law. A very brief perusal of the history of that time is sufficient to show how determined the authorities were that their own doctrines and practices should be preserved intact, as if they were entirely without error, and every other doctrine or opinion absolutely prohibited. Such indeed, was their intolerance that they were more than once rebuked by the king and even by their

Congregational brethren of intolerant England. A sketch of the laws passed for a hundred years from 1631 shows this determination very clearly. In that year citizenship was refused to all but members of the churches; then one uniform (Congregational) order for the churches was established and any other kind of a church forbidden; then excommunicated members were fined for not seeking to get back into the church and threatened with imprisonment and banishment while every one was compelled to "voluntarily contribute" for "upholding the ordinances" on pain of being sold out by the constable. Banishment was decreed for opposition to infant baptism or if one should "purposely depart the congregation at the administration of this ordinance." If any staid away from church they were to pay five shillings fine. If one renounced his membership in the "Standing Order" (by turning Baptist for instance), he was fined forty shillings a month until he came back. If he scoffed at the gospel or at the minister he was to be pilloried. Quakers were to be whipped and imprisoned immediately upon their arrival in the colony and banished; if they came back, one ear was to be cut off; upon the second return the other ear was to be cut off; the third time their tongue was to be bored through with a red hot iron and the fourth time they were to suffer death. These laws against the Quakers however, were not long in force. No one could build a church without license from the (Congregational) court and every one must pay tax for the support of the regular minister. No one could preach within the parish of a regular minister without his consent, and of course he would consent to

none but his own kind. In 1728 a law was passed (to be in force only five years) ostensibly to relieve Baptists from taxation for the support of other ministers and this was followed by others; but they required them to acknowledge themselves as *ana*-baptists,—*re*-baptizers, which was an intentional slur, they were hedged about with requirements of registration, certificates and so forth, and so defective that they could not be enforced, so that they were an added source of aggravation and expense instead of being a relief. Finally the Baptists determined to make a firm and united stand against all this and secure their liberties and their rights, and after due consultation a systematic and determined effort was begun for the repeal of unjust laws and the securing to all full liberty of conscience. At a meeting of the Warren Association in 1769, (which then practically included all New England Baptists), a committee was appointed to secure full information of particular cases of injustice, formulate petitions and present them to the authorities, prepare appeals to the people, and in every way agitate for religious liberty. This committee on grievances was continued for thirty-six years. The next year Rev. John Davis was appointed the official agent of the churches for this purpose and upon his death two years later Rev. Isaac Backus was appointed in his stead and held the position for fifteen years, and in fact was a leader until his death in 1806. Here then, was a Baptist organization with a paid agent the sole purpose and effort of which was to break the yoke of religious oppression and secure equal rights of conscience for all. That their cause was just would

abundantly appear if we had time for the relation of their losses of money and property, homesteads and even church and burial place, by reason of the unjust taxation, to say nothing of endless aggravation and personal suffering and loss in imprisonments and fruitless processes of law.

For a long time their efforts were laughed at and themselves ignored. As Dr. Hovey says, "Their principles were caricatured, their purposes maligned, their integrity questioned, their petitions slighted and their hopes deferred;"* but finally they gained a hearing and the justice of their case was seen. The Great Awakening in 1741 and succeeding years added many to their numbers and increased their influence; for the Separates and New Lights, as they were called, were Baptists in principle and in large numbers became such in name, sometimes a whole church with its pastor avowing themselves as Baptists and being received as such. They could no longer be ignored nor their rights denied, and these rights were at length granted, although it was not until 1833 that the establishment was finally broken and the last law against full religious liberty swept from the statute books of Massachusetts.

II. A like systematic attempt was made also in Virginia, where Baptists were even more bitterly persecuted than in Massachusetts and where the conflict was more fierce and the victory more quickly won. The charter of Virginia made Episcopacy the exclusive religion of the state, and under this charter many oppressive laws were passed at different times. The

*Life and Times of Isaac Backus, p. 157.

law of 1611 already noticed required every one to go to an Episcopal minister and give an account of himself, and for the first refusal he was to be whipped, for the second to be whipped twice and to make public confession, and for the third to be whipped every day until he would go. Episcopal ministers were supported and farms were bought for them by taxes laid upon every one. Fifty pounds of tobacco was the fine for staying away from Episcopal church service, and two thousand pounds for refusing to have a child sprinkled. Marriages and funerals could only be conducted by Episcopal ministers. Every one but an Episcopal minister was forbidden to preach, but the Baptists did preach, in private houses, in farm yards, in forests and even from jail windows, and thousands were converted. It seems to have been the need of concerted action against these oppressions which first brought about a state organization of the Baptists called the General Association, and this body went immediately to work. Their first victory was in 1775, when they secured the admission of Baptist chaplains to the army. This was a great step, for it implied their recognition as a denomination. One movement followed another in which they were ably supported by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison and Patrick Henry, whose political prominence made them invaluable allies, until in 1779 the laws authorizing taxation for the support of the clergy were abolished, religious freedom was established, and the establishment entirely done away. A proposition was afterwards made to tax all alike for the support of religion but allowing each one to designate his money

to whichever church he chose. Episcopalians, Methodists, and some Presbyterians petitioned for the passage of this measure, but the influence against it was too strong and it was dropped. The work was finally finished in 1802, when the parish farms, paid for by taxation, were ordered to be sold and the money applied to public uses. We may probably accept the testimony of (Episcopal) Bishop Hawkes when he says, "The Baptists were the principle promoters of this work, and in truth, aided more than any other denomination in its accomplishment;" and the testimony of Bishop Meade, when he says of what he calls "the Baptist church in Virginia" that "it took the lead in dissent and was the chief object of persecution by the magistrates, and the most violent and persevering afterwards in seeking the downfall of the establishment;" and again when he wails thus: "The warfare begun by the Baptists seven and twenty years before was now finished. The Church was in ruins and the triumph of her enemies was complete." For says Dr. Curry: "In this grand struggle, while individuals of all parties joined in the opposition, the Baptists as a denomination stood alone, except so far as they were aided by the few Quakers."

III. But these movements in Virginia and Massachusetts were only part of a more general struggle for religious liberty for the whole Union. When the first Continental Congress assembled the Baptists were there and well represented by a strong committee headed by such men as Isaac Backus, President Manning, Hezekiah Smith and Morgan Edwards, who came with strong arguments in support of their demand for justice. This

action bore large fruit though not immediately, but they were grossly misrepresented for it as disloyal to the cause of the colonies against the mother country, and as if they had presented claims and threatened to prevent the union of the colonies if their claims were not allowed. But no people more heartily and loyally supported the revolutionary movement than the Baptists, and from the whole history of the war there is not left to us the name of so much as one Baptist Tory. Judge Curwen, who was a Loyalist and in his "Journal and Letters" gives much valuable information concerning Loyalist exiles, gives the names of nine hundred and twenty-six persons of note who sympathized with the British and a still larger list of those who as Tories were exiled by colonial law, but there is not one known Baptist among them. Three hundred were prohibited from coming back into Massachusetts. Of the twenty-one chaplains in the revolutionary army whose names are known six were Baptists, which is much more than their proportion. Rhode Island was about two-thirds Baptist and Rhode Island furnished a larger number of soldiers proportionately than any other colony and a like thing was true of Virginia and other and smaller districts where Baptists were numerous. The loyalty of Baptists to the revolution was so well known to the British that they were special objects of vengeance, and a far larger proportion of their churches were destroyed in the war than of any other denomination. Washington also wrote to the General Committee of Virginia Baptists in reply to an address upon the new Federal Constitution, "While I recollect with satisfaction that the religious

society of which you are members have been throughout America uniformly and almost unanimously the firm friends of civil liberty and the persevering promoters of our glorious Revolution, I cannot hesitate to believe that they will be the faithful supporters of a free yet efficient general government."

When the Constitution of the United States had been adopted by the convention gathered to frame it, it was submitted to the various states to be ratified. Immediately the Baptists gathered to consider whether it sufficiently secured their religious liberties, and concluded that it did not. The only provision it made as to religion was that "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." Nevertheless they advised its adoption, as they were not willing to imperil the government by its defeat. The favorable action of nine states was necessary for its adoption and its fate seemed to hang upon the vote of Virginia. It was the action of Rev. John Leland, famous in Baptist annals, which turned the scale for its adoption in Virginia. He was nominated as the anti-federalist candidate to the convention which was to decide the issue for the state, Mr. Madison being the opposing federalist candidate. His popularity was so great that his election was deemed sure notwithstanding the eminence of his opponent. According to the custom of those days, the citizens assembled to hear the opposing candidates set forth their views and argue their case one after the other. Mr. Madison spoke first and Mr. Leland listened with careful attention, and after his conclusion, ascended the

platform and, instead of opposing him, declared himself convinced by the arguments of Mr. Madison that they ought to vote for the new constitution, and withdrew his candidacy. This action of Mr. Leland secured Mr. Madison's return to the convention, when his opposition would surely have prevented it. As it was Madison's influence in the convention that carried the new constitution through it, and as without Virginia the nine states necessary for its adoption could not have been secured, a Virginia statesman, in his eulogy on James Madison, publicly declared that "the credit of the adoption of the Constitution of the United States belonged to a Baptist clergyman, formerly of Virginia, by the name of Leland."*

But the Virginia Baptists immediately began an agitation to make freedom in religious matters more secure, and by the advice of Madison they addressed Washington upon the subject, and received from him strong assurance of his sympathy with them in the matter of securing religious freedom. It was through their efforts that, a month after this, the famous First Amendment to the Constitution was proposed under the leadership of Madison and Jefferson, and though earnestly opposed in Congress was finally passed and ratified by the states; and thus came into the Constitution those words so often quoted, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." As Dr. Gambrell said at the Young People's Convention in Baltimore, "If there had been no Baptists there would have been

*See Bap. Quar. Review, 1871, p. 250.

no First Amendment to the Constitution." This did not, of course, do away with the existing establishments of churches in the various states nor forbid oppressive state laws, but it threw the influence of the national government against them, and since 1787 no attempt has been made towards the establishment of a church in any state.

V. Another influence often mentioned and sometimes disputed is that which came through a Baptist church upon Mr. Jefferson in furnishing him with ideas of government which he afterwards embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. At the basis of every great movement and at the turning point in every crisis stands a man, and in the mind of that man there is a thought. He may or may not be conscious of the origin of that thought. It may have come to him at the suggestion of some other, himself obscure, but in his mind it takes root and through him becomes the power to move a nation. So the world may or may not know the real origin of its best things. In this way, through Thomas Jefferson, is the Baptist principle in church government said to have given shape to this government. And indeed, in those familiar words, "We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," we seem to hear the far away voice of the early Anabaptists; and in the words "that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," to

see only the broader gleam of that principle long before established by Roger Williams and practically exhibited in every Baptist church. There was a Baptist church not far from Mr. Jefferson's home in Monticello whose meetings for business he sometimes attended, (Curtis says, for months in succession), and with whose pastor he was well acquainted. It is said that this pastor, Rev. Andrew Tribble, once asked him how he liked their church government and that he replied that it struck him with great force and interested him much; that he considered it the only form of true democracy then existing in the world, and that he had concluded that it would be the best plan of government for the American colonies. This was several years before the Declaration of Independence.

I see no reason to doubt the truth of this statement, and indeed, if we must doubt it then we are uncertain of very much that is taken for history, for it is better attested than many things that are received. Mr. Tribble made this statement himself to Dr. Fishback and by him it was written down. Mr. Curtis in his "Progress of Baptist principles" states that "a gentleman of the highest respectability and well known in North Carolina" told him personally "that his attention had been called to the subject and he, knowing that the venerable Mrs. Madison had some recollections on the subject, asked her in regard to them. She expressed a distinct recollection of Mr. Jefferson speaking on the subject, and always declaring that it was a Baptist church from which these views were gathered."* It is

*Page 357.

certainly true that both Jefferson and Madison and their families were well acquainted with the struggles of the Baptists and deeply interested in them, and it is not possible that they, being the men they were and working with them so long for the same ends in Virginia, should not have known and thoroughly understood the principles which they advocated and upon which their churches were conducted. Jefferson's mother was an Episcopalian but her sister, his favorite Aunt, was a Baptist, as was also a brother of Madison. Jefferson also writes "To the members of the Baptist Church of Buck Mountain," calling them his friends and neighbors and thanking them for congratulations, "*We have acted together from the origin to the end of a memorable revolution* and we have contributed, each in the line allotted to us, our endeavors to render its issues a permanent blessing to our country." He understood their aims and worked with them for their accomplishment. Mrs. Madison was a remarkable woman, was intimately acquainted with Mr. Jefferson and certainly had ample opportunity to know his views and their origin, and her testimony should be decisive. To be sure he was not ignorant of the history of other republics, and to be sure he could not be conscious of the ultimate source of all his thoughts; but certainly we ought to receive his own statement, repeatedly made, as to the origin of his ideas of government and Mrs. Madison testifies that he always declared that it was from a Baptist church that he derived them. There seems no room to doubt therefore, that it was the practical working of Baptist principles in a Baptist church that, through Mr. Jeffer-

son, largely gave form and spirit to the government of this Union, and that it was the working out of Baptist principles in a Baptist government, influencing the nation in an ever widening circle, that worked mightily to the same end.

And again, the *Baptists are the leaders in the struggle which is now going on* for the extension of this principle of religious liberty throughout the world. They were the original agitators for the separation of church and state in England, and are still leaders although others have adopted their principles and are working side by side with them; and although bitterly opposed by interested Lords and clergy, we can clearly see that disestablishment in England is bound to come at no distant day.

Through the struggles of Baptist missionaries the entering wedge has been inserted in Sweden and Norway and Denmark and is being driven home. The struggle begun again in Germany with Dr. Oncken is being bravely carried on by our brethren of today. In Mexico Baptists and Presbyterians are teaching principles of liberty and the nobility of regenerated man to those who have known only the superstition and despotism of a vile and tyrannical church. And in our own land the more than four millions of Baptists are lifting up their voice in the demand that the last vestige of the unholy alliance shall be swept away and all forms of state aid to any church be forbidden. The contest over government appropriations for Indian schools is still fresh in our minds, and we remember with pleasure that it was General Thomas J. Morgan, a Baptist min-

ister and teacher and now Secretary of our Home Mission Society, who, when Indian Commissioner of the United States, gave the death blow to the system by which millions of dollars have been given by the government for the teaching of Roman Catholicism and the making disciples to this and other forms of religion. Congregationalists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Friends, Mennonites, Unitarians and Lutherans were all receiving government aid for their denominational schools, while the Roman Catholics were receiving far more than all the rest together and the Baptists alone consistently supported their own schools, never asking or receiving aid from the government. To the honor of these other denominations be it said that as the agitation of the question brought out the inconsistency and wrong of their position, one after another voluntarily relinquished such aid, first the Methodists, then the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, and then the rest, until now the Roman Catholics stand alone in opposition to all others in the matter. As the years go by and the final outcome of the matter is more fully seen, the importance of this action will be more apparent and the influence of Dr. Morgan in it more fully appreciated.

Thus the struggle goes on, and thus through the centuries victory follows victory, and thus it will go on until the principle of man's right to his own conscience is established, not only in this country but throughout the world, and the anomalous spectacle of a church claiming to be the church of Christ upheld, patronized and forced upon unwilling souls by the power of a

worldly government, will be a thing of the past. When that time comes and the influence of what has been gained has gone round the world; when the work has been accomplished and the sum of human liberty is complete, then it will be seen that Baptists from the beginning have held the right principle, that their struggles and their sufferings have been a priceless gift to the world, and that they have been the strongest single force which has contributed to the grand result.

Let me now close with an extract from Dr. Bitting: "Here and now, except Romanists, all christians and the unconnected masses defend the doctrine of religious liberty. Just here it is that, on review, Baptists claim their noblest moral victory in the contest. Not only in codes but in hearts have they lodged those sublime principles for which their blood was profusely shed in the past; for which they once and long stood up alone, and by which any man of any faith may find immunity from the fierceness and relentlessness of religious hate, persecution and vengeance. Baptists do not cite the facts in any mere love of boasting or with any wish to wound, but simply to defend their history; to repel the mis-statements of malice or ignorance; to remind themselves and their children of the cost of our heritage of freedom and to warn them to preserve it from the bigotry which would proscribe any man's religious privileges."

" 'With a great sum' did Baptists buy that liberty wherein we were 'born free.' Let no Baptist stain or disgrace it with either infidelity or intolerance."

"Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

"That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you also, that ye also may have fellowship with us: yea and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ: and these things we write that our joy may be fulfilled."

V.

BAPTIST INFLUENCE ON THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF OTHER RELIGIOUS BODIES.

Looking back beyond the beginning of the present century, or perhaps to the middle of the last century, we can see that a very great change has taken place in the beliefs and practices of religion. At that time were found everywhere state churches; religion enforced by law; churches only formal and religion only a matter of ceremonies; the mass of the people unreached; spirituality dead or too feeble to utter any effective protest; vital piety preserved only in a few proscribed sects; evangelical and missionary enterprise unknown; infant baptism almost universal and church membership only by infant baptism and subsequent confirmation; the great body of the church membership unconverted and a considerable part of it actually licentious, drunken and vile and sometimes even atheistic; the ministry no better than the people; sacred things commonly ministered by men destitute of spiritual knowledge and often immoral and profligate; sermons and religious teaching only dogmatic or philosophic essays, giving stones

instead of bread and serpents instead of fish; the ministry not a ministry but a priesthood, for which education without spiritual qualifications was considered sufficient preparation. But now we find everywhere in what we call the evangelical denominations a genuine, spiritual christianity, and much of it even in those churches which have been state churches; conversion is a requisite to church membership generally, even though conversion be loosely defined; missionary enterprise is everywhere exhibited; the Bible is honored more than at any other period of history; churches are active in every social and moral reform; irreligious life in church members is a matter of popular remark and general condemnation; revivals are frequent and sought for; ministers for the most part are spiritual men and an unconverted ministry is condemned; immorality in the ministry is sufficient ground for deposition from office; and the preaching of the pulpit is for the most part gospel and efficient. Truly the change has been great.

Again as we look at the state churches, the Lutheran, the Episcopal, the Presbyterian and the Roman Catholic, we see a great change even in them and especially in this country. The Presbyterian church has dropped its character as a state church altogether and become openly evangelical. The Episcopal has taken on a character of religious zeal and activity altogether foreign to it in earlier days. The dead formalism of England has been improved in America into something very like to spiritual life. The Lutheran church is quite changed as to its influence and teaching and from some at least of its pulpits the saving truths of the gospel are declared

with clearness and power. In many Lutheran churches prayer meetings are held and Sunday Schools conducted, which is a thing unknown in the old country; Sunday Schools there being only to prepare for confirmation. Their churches are for the most part thronged and their ministers of a character to command respect. In contrast to this, note the statements of a recent lecturer, for more than four years a student in German universities, concerning the churches in Germany. The Protestant churches, he says, are mammoth organizations having a membership ranging all the way up to seventy-five thousand in a church, but the great majority pay little or no attention to church services. Seven years ago there were six hundred and sixty-six thousand members of state Protestant churches in Berlin and only fifty thousand seats in all the Protestant churches of the city. At morning preaching services on Sunday in a church having forty thousand members, he counted only eighteen present, and at another with twelve thousand members, a hundred and fifty present. There are in all Germany with fifty-three millions of population, only thirty thousand, two hundred and fifty preachers, Protestant and Catholic, while in America among the four millions of our faith and practice alone there are about thirty-three thousand ordained preachers.

The changes in the Roman Catholic Church are not as marked, for it is the boast of Rome that she never changes. Yet evangelical influences have greatly modified even Rome, and there is noticeable a better intelligence and a more independent spirit among the

people and a less arrogant attitude of the priests towards the people, especially in this country. The occasional uprisings of a parish against the church authorities which are reported in the newspapers when some unwelcome priest is forced upon them or some favorite, but too liberal, priest is taken from them, are very significant of a growing spirit of freedom and a restlessness under domination, even among the Roman Catholics.

In another respect also there has been a great change. At the middle of the last century not only was there an established church upheld by persecuting laws in all the countries of Europe, but also in every one of the American colonies except Rhode Island and Pennsylvania. The Papacy ruled in France and other parts of Europe and Protestants were few and feeble. Lutheranism ruled in Germany and had driven the Baptists out. Episcopacy collected its money tax in England and its tobacco tax in Virginia, and while Presbyterianism was established by law in Scotland, Congregationalism sustained itself by taxes and fines in New England. While here and there *individuals* were for freedom in religion, not a single religious body save the Baptists and Quakers had lifted up their voice for it, but all in turn had claimed, and as far as possible had exercised, the right to define and promote religion by law and to pursue and punish those who disputed their definition. Now it is different. In no part of these United States is there a church upheld by law to the exclusion of others, nor is there to be found more than two bodies (Catholics and Mormons) who would

either favor or permit it. Court after court has decided that it knows nothing of any church save as a body of people claiming protection in their natural rights, and that before its bar every church has the same privileges and may claim the same protection. In France, Catholic France, Protestant missions are conducted openly and with safety. In Italy Baptist and Methodist preachers lift up their voices within sound of the Vatican and the Pope growls harmlessly. In most of Germany and in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, Baptists may live and work without molestation save as it may arise from the jealousy of the priests and the prejudices of the people. In Scotland the Free Kirk stands side by side with the Established Kirk, equal to it in numbers and influence, and disputes its authority. In Ireland the Establishment has disappeared. In England full half the people are dissenters, and the Establishment is upheld only by the selfish interest of the House of Lords and the power of a conservatism which bows low before precedent and venerates antiquity; and in Wales the main hindrance to its overthrow is the certainty on the part of its supporters that if it were lost in Wales it could not be saved in England. Truly these changes have been great.

What has produced them? Several things. Unscriptural religion and unchristian christianity has demonstrated its own impotence even as did ancient heathenism. The natural humanity of man has revolted from the scenes of cruelty and suffering it has witnessed and has lost faith in a principle which could produce such scenes, and so there has been a revulsion in favor

of liberty. Better bible facilities have made the people better acquainted with the word of God wherein they read of the loving spirit of Jesus, of the liberty wherein he makes men free, and of a church of spiritual membership, baptized upon profession of personal faith and regeneration. The personal work of the Spirit of God has brought great revivals among men, leading them to a truer knowledge of real religion and a better spirit in religious things, a more spiritual life and a closer obedience to Christ's will. But while the law of the race under a gospel dispensation is progress and many things work together for the same end, it is always true that there are leaders in this progress, some whose privilege it is to be specially marked as instruments of good in producing such great changes. And as to these changes, we can but notice that they have been just along the line of Baptist teaching and are, in fact, but a fuller acceptance of those truths which have been our principles from the beginning; "and therein do we rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." We remember that in the beginning Baptists were the only agitators of these questions and that they have been the most persistent agitators of them all the way through. We remember the great amount of their writings and disputations upon these subjects, their confessions published to the world or given before magistrates and tribunals, their testimonies given under torture and their sublime deaths, which have called attention to their principles. We remember the very large infusion of Baptist blood into other churches, at least in this country; the thousands upon thousands converted

under Baptist influences and for various reasons uniting with other churches, and the multitude of Baptist daughters who have married Pedobaptist sons and gone with them into Pedobaptist churches, and the other thousands who have accepted Baptist principles and yet remain in other churches, all these to be a leaven and an influence of no small importance. We remember all these things, I say, and think it not too much to claim that these changes have been very largely due to Baptist influence. They have been made in response to a call back to the true spirituality and simplicity of the New Testament, and in just so much as they have been a return to a true gospel may every one of us be grateful and glad.

But before discussing these more modern influences let us go back for a little while to the times of the Reformation. The name of Martin Luther has been vastly praised and lauded, and multitudes bowing down before his utterances have worshiped him as other multitudes have worshiped John Calvin and John Wesley, and the impression often made upon the young student is that the great Reformation was almost entirely his work, just as it is often called Luther's Reformation. But nothing could be more of a mistake than that. One man cannot make a reformation, and had he not had many predecessors and many helpers, Luther himself would never have been heard of. We hear most of the great commanders, but a commander alone can not carry on a campaign or win a battle. Back of him there is a great army of common men, and to win his fame many a heroic deed is done by the

soldier in the ranks whose name, even, the world never knows. So, had there not been a long period of preparation and a large background of gospel teaching and believing among the people, and many lesser movements preceeding, the great Reformation had never been. A reformation in religion, like a reformation in government, implies a wide spread movement among the people. This preparation was plainly the work of the older and evangelical forces of an Anabaptist character, known at various times under different names as Waldensians, Arnoldists, Hussites, Anabaptists, etc., terms which are not exclusive of each other, as these various bodies run into each other in a way which makes clear distinction between them often impossible. Of the forces of the Reformation itself the truest and the purest was the great Anabaptist movement, which sought not to re-form but to re-create, bringing the people back to the true gospel and the right way of salvation through faith in Christ and cutting loose from unspiritual princes and worldly powers as well as from the slavery of dead forms; and bitter indeed was the disappointment of these gospel workers when they found that some of the worst features of the old corrupt establishment were to be preserved; that the new churches, instead of being spiritual bodies, were to be composed of a motley mixture of materials and to be controlled, directed and supported by the secular power.

What Europe would have been today if the despised Anabaptists had been allowed their liberty is not difficult to imagine. The continent would have been

filled with evangelical churches, living pure lives and preaching a pure gospel. The Reformation would have gone as far beyond Lutheranism as Lutheranism did beyond the Papacy. The Papacy itself would have been honeycombed with gospel truth and well nigh destroyed. The enterprise of modern missions would have been begun two hundred years sooner than it was, and the world today would have been fully evangelized. Popular liberty would have taken the place of imperialism, and old world monarchy would have been a thing of the past, even though the form of it were still maintained. State churches would have been long ago abandoned with their oppressive priesthood, and a long and awful story of religious bigotry and hate would have remained untold. And, what to the christian is a thought of infinite sadness, untold millions who have lived and died would have learned the way of life and chosen it, instead of being left in delusion to follow a path of darkness and go out into deeper darkness at the end. When we consider a hundred years of our own history and see what a free church in a free state has done, this picture does not seem overdrawn.

What the condition of the reformed church is today has been already told. State churches with their unconverted ministers, christian members few and far between just in proportion as they have not been influenced by dissenting bodies; that is the picture. All the rationalism and infidelity of the day is the product of these false churches, and all the wild schemes of men to break down the authority of God and uproot his Word among men have been hatched by their

accredited Professors of Theology and Doctors of Divinity. Dr. Samuel Haskell says that some years ago he heard it publicly stated by a Presbyterian clergyman who had studied abroad in his young manhood, that when Robert Haldane, the Scotch Baptist, entered Geneva in the year 1816 *there was not known to be a converted person* in that historic center of Reformation christianity, and the surprise awakened by the statement was only increased by the investigation which verified it. He says, "Under this spiritual death the creed of Calvinism was but a skeleton, nor even that without the loss of its principal parts. Pastors and theological teachers, students and people at large had gone over to formalism and rationalism. Arian, Unitarian and rationalistic essays had usurped the place of preaching and teaching the Lord Jesus. Bible instruction was unknown. Worldly life and dissipating pleasures overran the sabbath and vitiated common morality. It had even come to pass that the fundamental doctrines in our religion were prohibited themes of discussion. Candidates for the ministry were required to sign a pledge not to agitate such subjects as the innate sinfulness of man, the God-head of Jesus, the Trinity, spiritual regeneration and the election of grace;"* and as Haldane began to discuss these prohibited themes, efforts were made to banish him from the city. And this in Geneva, the city of John Calvin, where his main work was done and where he supposed the best triumphs of his life were wrought! Such was the outcome of the work of one of the greatest of the

*Heroes and Hierarchs, p. 240.

Reformers and of the church formed under his own hand! It only shows again how a wrong principle adopted in the beginning will in the end bring to naught the work of the greatest men, and that a church made up of unregenerate people, brought in through infant baptism is *not* the church against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

The Reformation was a mighty movement; towards a purer doctrine, for the most of Lutheran theology is good; towards learning, to which a great impulse was given; towards liberty, for the power that was enslaving men was broken, and although not destroyed, it never regained its hold and never will. And yet the Reformation viewed as a spiritual force, a spiritual movement resulting in a true church and leading men to Christ, was a failure, (how much a failure those can best understand who have lived and tried to do christian work fully under the blighting and deadening influence of the Lutheran church); and the Reformation churches have found their true prosperity and success only in proportion as they have abandoned Reformation principles of church life and come over upon Anabaptist ground; and in proportion as they have adopted the principles of those whom, in that time, they persecuted. Upon the very ground and among the same peoples where the Reformers taught, the work of the Reformation has now to be done over again, and a large part of the Reformation church is as truly missionary ground as is the Papacy or heathenism. Reformation principles have proved themselves defective and Anabaptist principles have proved themselves true. I would like

to suggest as the subject of a most interesting and instructive treatise which some well qualified person ought to write, "The failure of the Reformation."

But what became of that which we have described as the best element of the Reformation,—those thousands upon thousands of Anabaptists? Have they left any permanent influence upon Europe, and if not, why not? It is a fair question but the answer is not far away; indeed we have already had the answer. Their principles were scorned, their writings were destroyed, their teachings proscribed, and they themselves perished amid the fires of persecution. Only a remnant escaped, foot sore, weary, poverty stricken and haunted, to meet anew those same fires in England and America until they were finally quenched by the spirit of freedom. Europe has waited to feel again in this century the reflex influence of that which there began, and her princes and priests again are trembling before those principles, now grown strong, which she then sought to destroy; and the twenty-eight thousand German and the forty-six thousand Scandinavian Baptists are seeking to do for Europe under better conditions, what they were not allowed to do in the days of the Reformation. The day will yet come when the Anabaptist influence in Europe will be powerfully revived to the blessing of the whole continent.

Returning now to more modern movements, the chief progress in religion has been mainly in two directions, namely, towards a *spiritual church membership*, and towards a fuller recognition of the *supreme and sole authority of the Bible*. These are specifically

Baptist doctrines, for they were not in the constitution and have not, until late years, been in the practice of other churches. To be sure, every church claims bible authority for its principles, but why then, such principles as are not to be found in the gospel and are contrary to it? And why the presence, and as far as they are concerned the omnipresence, of a little book which supersedes and contradicts the Bible in giving rules for the church? And to be sure, every church claims a christian membership, and in these days the membership of evangelical churches is mainly made up of converted persons, but that is a departure from the original idea, and some of them are very loose in their definition of conversion and make very small demands upon candidates for membership. The fundamental idea of a Baptist church is *conversion*, by which we mean regeneration; the idea of the other churches is a profession, a training in religiousness, and a standing in church connection. This fundamental idea of conversion is not in the Presbyterian standards, though it is largely in their practice, but the church is made to consist of believers and their children, a phrase which occurs over and over in Presbyterian writings, and the unbelieving children are held to be proper subjects of a church ordinance and, after certain teaching, of membership in the church. Their theory of a church is that of a training school wherein unbelievers are educated into holiness, rather than a company of those who have been regenerated into holiness. It is not in the Methodist Discipline, which provides that any person having the desire for a godly life may become a

member of the Class on probation, and at the end of six months, if he still have the same desire and is striving for righteousness and has lived a correct life, he may be received into full connection; and yet he may know full well and his minister may know that he has never experienced a change of heart and is not a child of God. It requires only a desire and a struggle, not a regeneration. It is not in the early Congregational theory or practice, for they admitted to membership the unconverted who had been sprinkled in infancy, at first not to the "communion," but afterwards, fully. Backus says that they never demanded conversion, even in their ministers, until after the Great Awakening in 1741. When Princeton Theological Seminary was being founded by the Presbyterians in 1812 it was a matter of formal and sober discussion whether it was necessary that a minister be a converted man, and considered that it *was not*.^{*} The doctrine of the Baptists was that a minister must be himself taught by the Spirit and so qualified by his own inward experience; that he must even be conscious of a personal and special call of God to that work, and they emphasized these qualifications in contrast to those who required only a full course of scholastic training. And yet now all these churches are seeking conversions and rejoicing in revivals which once were considered improper and unauthorized and inadmissible. A hundred years ago the Baptists were the only body who held conversion to be an indispensable requisite to church membership, but this has now come to be generally recognized.

^{*}Curtis' Rise and Prog., Etc., p. 66.

The other line of progress is not less marked, namely, a growing acknowledgement of the supreme authority of the Bible; and this is really what has produced the improvement of which we have just spoken. This, you will remember, is what we gave as our fundamental principle; *the absolute authority of Christ in his church*, and therefore the absolute authority of the New Testament which is His will revealed. It has been the custom of others to run back to creeds and councils and church fathers for their authority, but the hold of the too much revered fathers on the conscience of the church is being broken, and the bible is coming to take a much larger place. The devil has noted this change with his accustomed shrewdness, and has therefore mustered all his available forces of scholarship on the one hand and liberalism on the other, in a desperate attempt to discredit the bible and break its hold on men, or at least, to weaken it as much as possible. But the effort already begins to fail.

This increased influence is due partly to the constant appeal of Baptists to the inspired authority as against the uninspired, and partly to the wide spread distribution of the Bible itself; for the common people read it, and their common sense tells them that if it is the word of God they ought to follow it instead of the word of man. As long as there are bibles there will be Baptists, and the more those bibles are studied the more will their tribe increase; for no matter what men may teach as ancient or venerable, or as to what is convenient or inconvenient, or as to what "makes no difference" and what does, there will always be some honest and hard

headed individuals to stand up and say, "But the bible does not teach it that way," and to insist that the bible way should be followed.

This drift bible-ward is shown in several ways. For example, it used to be sufficient to quote the fathers and the doctors, and the opinion of a learned man was counted as sufficient defense of any given practice; but now men have begun to feel that their positions must be sustained by arguments from the Bible. This has given rise to all sorts of absurd and ridiculous things, to be sure, since men have invented all sorts of institutions and practices of their own without any command of God, and now are trying to defend them by appealing to his commands, and defend human institutions as if they were set up by divine authority. So we are asked to accept the infallibility of the Pope on the ground of the primacy of Peter whose successor he claims to be, when Peter was never a leader of the Apostles in any other sense than as the one of a company who is the quickest to think and act naturally comes into prominence and leadership, when his leadership was soon superseded by Paul's, who "rebuked him to his face," and in comparison with whose permanent influence upon the church of Christ Peter's is very small indeed. Besides there is no evidence that Peter was ever in Rome until the very last of his life if even then, and never as its bishop, while we know that Paul was. The Papacy committed a great blunder in not claiming descent and heritage of office from Paul instead of Peter. Again, Peter's supposed successors have insisted on the celibacy of the clergy, while he is the only one

of the Apostles of whom we positively know that he was a married man; for we read that Peter's mother-in-law was sick.

In like manner infant baptism is defended by the claim that it takes the place of circumcision, a claim that involves contradictions and absurdities, and of which not the least mention is made in the New Testament, although there were many occasions which certainly required its mention if it had been true. Circumcision was fundamental in their faith, as infant baptism has been in that of Pedobaptist churches, and Paul was constantly assailed for his insistence that it was no longer necessary. You remember how vehemently he declares to the Galatians "Behold I Paul say unto you, that, if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing." And again he alludes to his continual persecution as proof positive that he was not (as some seem to have represented him as doing) preaching circumcision. How easily he could have let himself out of the continual trouble with the Judaizers by simply saying "Why yes, brethren, I still uphold our ancient rite of circumcision, only now, you know, it has been changed and we baptize the children instead of circumcising them." It is not conceivable that he would not have said some such thing if it had been true, for the occasion demanded it. It is also defended by the assertion that in the New Testament household baptisms there must of necessity have been infants included; an assertion which rests purely upon the imagination. A good reply was made by a Baptist brother once when a Methodist brother insisted that

there must have been infants in the household of Lydia, and that therefore they were baptized. "Why no, my dear sir," said he, "you are mistaken. Lydia was a widow, and the only children she ever had were two daughters, one of whom was at this time seventeen years old and the other twenty." "Indeed!" replied the Methodist, "and where did you get such astonishing information as that?" "Why," said the Baptist, "I got my information just where you got yours; *I guessed at it*, and my guess is just as good as your guess."

The drift is seen again in the disposition to revise or discard or disregard the old creeds and doctrinal statements of the churches, and to set aside the decisions of councils which for ages have been venerated as much as the Bible itself. We remember, for instance, the late discussion concerning the revision of the Westminster Catechism, in which such revision was openly called for by many prominent ministers and upon the ground that its statements are not according to bible teaching and are not believed by the Presbyterians of today.

It was a growing sense of the importance of the Bible and of having its every word an exact and true representation of the original that led to the Revised Version of 1881, to produce which the best scholarship of England and America gave its best effort; though even here an ancient conservatism and church influence was too much felt, and it stops short of the whole truth. The wonderful impulse given to bible study in these late years, showing itself in bible conferences, classes for study and published helps innumerable,

needs no remark, and in this the Revision was largely instrumental. But to the Revision itself a great impulse was given by Baptist influence, for they were the beginners in the work, agitating the subject through millions of pamphlets, tracts and other documents, and a copy of our own Bible Union version of 1865 was in the hands of each one of the revisers—a version which, for faithfulness and clearness has never been surpassed. Baptists have always been foremost in bible translations and revisions. The great British and Foreign Bible Society owes its origin to the interest aroused by the translation and publication of the scriptures in India by Dr. Carey, one of our ministers, and to the energetic efforts of Rev. Joseph Hughes, another of our ministers. Though thus founded by a Baptist, his brethren were afterwards driven out of it for their insistence upon a faithful version for the heathen, as they were soon after from the American Bible Society for the same reason.* The first notable translations into heathen tongues were made by William Carey, and with the help of Marshman and Ward the Bible was translated into thirty-one different languages in ten years. The first complete Chinese bible was translated by Dr. Marshman, and the Chinese New Testament now in universal use by Dr. Josiah Goddard, the Assamese and the Japanese bibles by Nathan Brown, the Burmese by Judson, the Siamese by John Taylor Jones, the Shan by Dr. J. N. Cushing, the Karen by Drs. Mason and Cushing, the Telugu by Dr. Jewett, all Baptists; and besides these there have been many others. The first

*This action is fully discussed in "Bible Societies and the Baptists" by Dr. C. C. Bitting, a little book which every Baptist ought to read. It is issued by the Publication Society.

translation into the language of the American Indians was made by Roger Williams twenty years before Elliott's famous Indian bible. And the only revision of the English bible ever undertaken by a single denomination was the Bible Union version already referred to.

Again, this drift is seen in the increasing number of immersions in other denominations and in the increasing number coming from other denominations to us on account of dissatisfaction with their baptism. I know of a large Methodist church not far away of which three fourths the members were immersed after conversion. I have seen a Methodist church in which a baptistery was built and nearly all of whose members are immersed, and have been told of two others. It is worthy of remark that nearly all the famous evangelists of the day have felt themselves obliged to receive immersion in order to be themselves obedient to the gospel they teach, although they think it expedient not to say much about it, and still hold their membership in Pedobaptist churches. The baptism of such noted men as Dr. A. T. Pierson of Philadelphia, and Dr. John Robertson of Glasgow, from whose sermon on believer's baptism and baby sprinkling I have already quoted, is noteworthy also, both being Presbyterians, and likewise the remark of Dr. Philip Schaff, probably the most noted Presbyterian scholar in the country, made before the Saratoga Bible Convention, that he believed in immersion and that, were it not for lifelong Presbyterian associations, he should be himself immersed and join with the Baptists.

But an especially interesting evidence of a return to New Testament principles is found in the *decline of infant baptism*. For myself, I am glad it has gone into a decline; may its sickness be without suffering; may its decline be rapid; may its demise be speedy and without regret, and may the world never look upon its like again. This change of feeling in regard to infant baptism means not only a difference but a *revolution* in church life, which is slowly working itself out; for this practice is not incidental in the churches which use it, but fundamental. It stands for a whole system of doctrines, and when it goes they go with it. It means baptismal salvation; it means the efficacy of sacraments; it means the authority of tradition as opposed to the authority of the Bible; it means a preaching of rites and ceremonies and forms instead of repentance and faith, and there are many other things that belong with it. Its discarding means the coming over of the churches upon the ground of personal faith and a regenerated life and personal obedience to our Master and Lord. It is beyond question that this practice does not have the hold upon the churches which it once had. Some Pedobaptist pastors are candid enough to admit that it is entirely without scriptural foundation, as does Dr. Lyman Abbott, in an editorial in the "Outlook" of November 27th, 1897. In discussing the recent Baptist Congress he says, "They" (the Baptists) "all hold, and hold as strongly as ever, the doctrine that Apostolic baptism was a symbolic expression of repentance and faith, and that to baptize infants who can neither repent nor exercise faith is a change of the original ceremony

from its original purpose. Historical scholarship abundantly confirms this contention. Infant baptism was unknown in the Apostolic church. It was introduced into the church at a post-Apostolic date. It has completely changed the significance of the rite. The change can be justified only on the ground that no rite is of the essence of christianity, and that the same spirit of christian liberty which allowed the christian church to dispense with circumcision allows it to change baptism from a symbolic act of faith by a penitent to a symbolic act of consecration by a parent." We may perhaps, be allowed our own opinion about the "christian" quality of such "liberty," and be allowed also to remark that, as circumcision never had any place in the christian church it never was "dispensed with." So it is now defended upon different grounds, and many Pedobaptist ministers do not care to defend it at all. Indeed the most of them do not care to talk about it and in a long conversation with a Methodist minister some time ago on this and kindred topics, all he would say was, "We don't make as much of that as we used to." It is not spoken of now as a necessary ordinance but as a matter of preference; not as a baptism at all, indeed, but only as a consecration or dedication of the child, or a presentation before the Lord. These things are significant but the figures on the subject are more significant, for they show that actually less infants in proportion year by year are thus "baptized" or "dedicated" or "consecrated" or "presented." There are several lines of evidence of this fact; first, the admissions of those who practice infant baptism, then the increase in the number

of adult baptisms and their proportion to infant baptisms, then the actually decreasing proportion of infant baptisms to membership.

The writings of Pedobaptists themselves show that in their opinion the practice is falling behind. Thus as to England, a writer in the London Spectator, F. Simcox Lea, stated, July 10th, 1880, as a well known fact that a comparison of the birth registers of London with the parish registers showed that less than half the children were "baptized." In a report of one of the Classes, or Presbyteries, of the Dutch Reformed Church held in 1879, we find that "In view of the great neglect of infant baptism the Classis at its Spring session requested Rev. F. H. Van Derveer D. D., to prepare a paper on this subject. An exceedingly able and instructive paper was presented by Dr. Van Derveer and a copy of the same was requested for publication." Note the phrase "in view of the great neglect of infant baptism." The "Christian at Work," some years ago, gave some figures on infant baptism and then said, "But one conclusion is deducible from these statistics; the adherence to infant baptism is not only practiced by less than one half the Presbyterian church membership but there is a decided falling off in the practice;" i. e. among those who still do practice it. A Chicago correspondent of "The Presbyterian" notes that "In our German churches during the last year, the baptisms of infants were one to every seven and one-half members, while in our American churches for the same time they were only *one to thirty members*." Records of Methodist Conferences contain references to the same sort of falling off, such

as this from the North Carolina Conference of 1880; "During the progress of the twentieth question the matter of infant baptism came up, owing to the small number reported baptized in some of the districts. Rev. A. W. Mangum spoke in reference to the injury done to the cause of infant baptism by a prominent Methodist publication." After some further remarks, the Bishop enjoined strict attention to the matter and they went on with their business. The Boston Congregationalist says under date of January 18th, 1882, "The simple fact appears to be that the doctrine of the evangelical churches as to infant baptism is in a transition state, and has at present a materially loosened hold upon the popular conviction . . . Congregationalists—under the attrition of Baptist friction on the one side, and the force of their own principles of individualism on the other—have become a good deal demoralized in this particular." " 'The attrition of Baptist friction' is good, very good."*

I have taken great pains to gather full and official figures of the five leading Pedobaptist denominations in America, giving the membership and the number of infant and of adult baptisms for each and every year as far back as the records have been preserved, and have carefully figured out also the ratio of baptisms—both infant and adult—to membership each year. The records of the (Dutch) Reformed church go back to the year 1825, of the Presbyterian to 1827, of the Methodist to 1857, of the Congregationalist to 1859, and of the Episcopal to 1868, with partial reports back to 1850.

*The above references are taken from Prof. H. C. Vedder's pamphlet on "The Decline of Infant Baptism," published in 1890.

These figures I have either copied myself from the official published reports or obtained from the publication headquarters through the favor of those in the employ of the various Boards.* A study of them is very interesting for many reasons. Having them all before us we can readily settle the question of the decline of infant baptism and its present status. There are variations—and sometimes quite notable variations—in the figures from year to year of course, but taking a long series of years together the steady increase in some columns and the steady decrease in others is very striking.

Taking first the adult baptisms; if we find them increasing year by year, the inference would naturally be that infant baptisms are decreasing, else these adults or many of them, would have been already baptized in infancy. If we find them *proportionately* increasing, the inference is plain; and if we find them proportionately increasing while the infant baptisms are proportionately decreasing, the conclusion is beyond question. In all the denominations we find, as we should expect as the denomination grows larger, an increase in the actual number of adults baptized. In three of these denominations there has been a decided increase in the proportion of adults baptized to membership, in another a slight increase, while in the other one there has been a decrease in the proportion both of adult and infant baptisms, which would seem to show that this denomination is not holding its own in the matter of growth. Taking an average of the first ten years of the record

*See full table of figures at the end.

in each case and comparing it with the average of the last ten years, we have the following proportions of adult baptisms to members:

INCREASE.

Presbyterians, from one in 50.2 members to one in 41.1	
Methodists, “ “ “ 26.8 “ “ “ “ 19.4	
Congregationalists, “ “ 128.6 “ “ “ “ 35.	
Reformed, “ “ “ 78.2 “ “ “ “ 77.2	

DECREASE.

Episcopalians, from one in 32.3 members to one in 51.2

Looking at it another way, we find that the Presbyterians, during the first twenty years, when their membership ran from a hundred and thirty-five thousand to two hundred and twenty thousand, baptized about seven thousand, three hundred and fifty less adults than infants each year on an average, but during the last twenty years, when their membership has been more than four times as large, and the difference therefore should be four times as great, they have averaged only about five thousand and nine hundred less each year. The Congregationalists in the first ten years from 1859 baptized four thousand, six hundred and fifty-five more adults than infants, but in the last ten years, while the membership is two and a half times as large, the excess of adult over infant baptisms is about seven times as large. Among the Methodists the ratio of infant baptisms is very regular, but in the column of adult baptisms there is great variation. In only four years have the infant outnumbered the adult baptisms, namely, in 1857, 1861, 1865 and 1881, while

in other years the adult baptisms have outnumbered the infant from a few hundred in 1880 and 1882 to one hundred and twelve thousand and five hundred in 1892; and in the ten years ending with 1897 they baptized three hundred and fifty-three thousand and eight hundred more adults than infants. In the Episcopal church the ratio of adult to infant baptisms remains about the same. In the Reformed church, while the proportion of adult baptisms to membership has increased very slightly, the proportion of infant baptisms has fallen decidedly, so that whereas they did in the first ten years baptize five and a half times as many infants as adults, in the last ten years they have baptized only four and three-tenths times as many. We find, therefore, that the adult baptisms have increased both actually and proportionately in all the denominations but one.

Coming now to the infant baptisms we find that in each case there has been a decrease in the proportion of baptisms to membership, and in all except the Methodist figures the decrease is a decided one. There is an increase, of course in the number of infants baptized, but their number has not grown nearly as fast as the number of members. We notice too, that this decrease has been very regular, showing that an educational process is going on and that a change of sentiment is being produced in regard to the matter. We notice too, that while there are great variations in the adult baptisms, showing years of revival and years of coldness, these years have affected the infant baptisms but slightly. The columns of ratios show very plainly that the feeling of obligation in regard to infant baptism is

gradually dying out and a belief in believers' baptism taking its place.

Taking up the denominations separately, we find the Presbyterians baptizing one infant to each thirteen and two-tenths members in 1827, and that they have never reached as high an average since. In 1837 the ratio is one in eighteen and eight-tenths; in 1847 one in nineteen; in 1857 the same as twenty years earlier, but from that point on there is a marked decrease, so that 1867 gives us one in twenty-three and nine-tenths, 1877 one in twenty-nine and eight-tenths, and in 1899 it reaches its lowest point, one in thirty-nine and three-tenths, just about one-third as many infants in proportion to members as in 1827.

But taking up one of their official records—and the one at hand happens to be for the year 1897—and examining the list of churches in detail, some very interesting things come to light. Thus it appears that the larger churches are very generally allowing the practice to fall into disuse, (and these, of course, are supposably led by their ablest pastors), and that the average is kept up by the smaller churches. Many churches of from one hundred to five hundred members report only a few, less than half a dozen, and in a majority of the churches of four hundred members and upwards, (a class of churches in which fifteen years ago, the average was from one in fifty to one in eighty), the average is only from one in seventy to one in a hundred, and a number of very large churches report none at all. For example, the Westminster church of Minneapolis, with sixteen hundred members, reports no

infant baptisms; the Cincinnati Second, with four hundred and eighty-four members, the Albany Second, with three hundred and thirty, the LaPorte, with three hundred and forty-four, and the Logansport, with five hundred and thirty-five, all report none. The Oakland First, California, with thirteen hundred and twelve members reports five; the Chicago First, with seven hundred and nine members, reports one; Newark, New Jersey, Third, with five hundred and seventy members, reports three; Albany Fourth, with eight hundred members, reports four; Ithaca, New York, with six hundred and sixty-five members, reports two; Fifth Avenue, New York City, Dr. John Hall pastor, with two thousand six hundred and fifty members, reports seven; (in 1880 they reported seventeen hundred and thirty members and twenty-one infant baptisms). The Madison Square, New York City, reports eight hundred and one members and three infant baptisms, and the Westminster, four hundred members and one infant baptism. The Pennsylvania churches of all kinds seem to average higher in infant baptisms than those of any other state, yet Germantown First, with nineteen hundred and ninety-one members reports no infant baptisms. But to show what a church can do when it really sets out to do something, we have the Madison Street Church of Baltimore, which with *two hundred and twelve* members baptized *two hundred and fifteen* babies! This beats the record of any church that has yet been discovered. But they must have gathered up nearly all the babies in Baltimore, for the La Fayette Square church with three hundred and seventy-four

members could only find two to baptize and the Westminster, with three hundred and forty-three members did not find any.

The Congregationalists show some surprising things in their statistics. Their ratio nowhere runs as high as either of the other denominations, yet they are the only ones that anywhere show any actual gain in the proportion of infants to membership. Beginning with one in forty-nine and four-tenths in 1859, they reach the lowest point in 1881 at one in eighty-nine and a half, and since then have come back to the same figure in 1897 as at the beginning. Yet over against this fact is to be set the fact that their Triennial Council, held in Portland in 1893, revised and recommended to the individual churches for adoption a confession of faith in which all reference to infant baptism was intentionally left out. Inasmuch as the Western churches show a higher average than the Eastern, and the smaller ones than the larger ones, I attribute their increase in infant baptisms to their growth in the newer communities of the West, where the effort to gather in and the contact with families of every faith would naturally lead to the baptism of everybody's babies. If a Congregational pastor can get a foothold in the family of one brought up in Lutheran or Methodist faith, and to some degree attach them to his church by baptizing their baby, he will naturally do it, especially in a small community where several struggling churches are striving for members. They are the only body that are not now baptizing less infants than ever before, and their last ten years compared with the first ten

shows an increase from one in fifty-nine to one in fifty-one and a half.

But here are some interesting things and some surprising variations: The Congregational Year Book for 1897 shows that the Western states averaged from one infant baptism in forty-two members to one in fifty-three; but Massachusetts, the home of Congregationalism, shows only one in sixty-nine; New Hampshire, one in a hundred and sixteen; and Maine one in a hundred and fifty-one, and in 1898, one in a hundred and eighty-two! Wisconsin, with almost twenty-two thousand members reports five hundred and eighty-three, and Vermont, with not two hundred less members, only two hundred and seventy-three. Ohio with more than three times the membership of Pennsylvania, reports only thirty-three more infant baptisms, and in 1898 reports six less. Minnesota, with a little more than eighteen thousand members reports four hundred and one, and New Hampshire, with a little more than twenty thousand reports a hundred and seventy one. The whole number of churches reporting in 1896 was five thousand five hundred and forty-six, and of these two thousand, six hundred and twenty-five or nearly half, reported no infant baptisms, though many of these were small churches. Churches of from four hundred to a thousand members are not very plenty in any denomination, yet in the Year Book for 1898 we notice twenty-four such churches that report no infant baptisms and fifteen more that report not more than three, besides many others that only report half a dozen or less. The other denominations show the same sort of variations.

These curious variations can mean but one thing, namely, that the doctrine of infant baptism is not held by many churches with any strictness and that churches in the same denomination vary much in the regard they have for it. It should be remembered too, that anything below the very highest averages shows a falling off in the practice; for the highest averages are the normal ones if the doctrine is strictly held, because of course no one baptizes more babies than they have, and when the average falls, it must be that not all have been baptized. The census reports show about one birth in twenty of the population each year, but we find the Presbyterians baptizing one to every twelve or thirteen of the membership, the Episcopalians one to five or six, and the Reformed even as many, in 1823, as one to *three*. Difference in conditions is also to be taken into account, and the fact that in the older states there has been much emigration and in the cities families are not as large, but that does not by any means explain it all. The only conclusion is that the doctrine is loosening its hold upon the churches.

The Methodists nowhere show as high an average as do the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians or the Reformed, nor is there a marked difference shown from year to year; yet, taking the first ten years and comparing them with the last ten, we find a decrease from one in twenty-four and six-tenths to one in twenty-six and seven-tenths, and in the last two years for which I have full figures the ratio is one in twenty-nine and six-tenths and one in thirty. Their highest ratio is one in twenty and one-half and their lowest one in thirty.

The Episcopal records previous to 1868 are only partial but serve well enough for purposes of comparison, as it is assumed that fuller records would not materially change the ratio of baptisms to membership. Their reports are given only once in three years and the membership given is that for the year of the report, while the baptisms given are the total for three years. The ratio therefore, is obtained by taking the average of baptisms and dividing the membership by it. This does not give a perfectly accurate result for any one year but does give accurate results for purposes of comparison during a series of years. The twenty-eight dioceses reporting in 1850 show a membership of a few less than eighty thousand, and one infant baptized to every six and three-tenths members. In 1859 it increases to one in five and six-tenths, and from that point steadily and evenly decreases to one in thirteen in 1898, when their last report was given. We should expect that here, if anywhere, the proportion would be maintained, but they are baptizing only about half as many as they did.

The Reformed church has preserved its records farther back than any of the others and I have complete figures back to 1815 except two years. But beginning in 1825, we find them baptizing one infant to every six members. In fourteen years they have fallen off one-half. In 1845 the ratio is one to fourteen and nine-tenths; in 1865 it is one to seventeen and six-tenths; in 1881 it drops off to one in twenty-one and three-tenths, which is exceptional, and comes up in 1899 to one in eighteen and six-tenths.

Gathering up these figures now, we have the highest and the lowest proportions as follows:

Presbyterians, highest, one in 13.2, lowest, one in 39.3					
Methodists, “ “ 20.5, “ “ 30.					
Congregationalists, “ 47. , “ “ 89.5					
Episcopalians, “ “ 5.6, “ “ 13.					
Reformed, “ “ 6. , “ “ 21.3					

Comparing the first year of the record used with the last, (and looking over the whole table of figures, this seems to give a very fair representation), we have the following:

Presbyterians, in 1827, one in 13.2, in 1899, one in 39.3					
Methodists, “ 1857, “ 25.4, “ 1897, “ 30.					
Congregat'l'ts, “ 1859, “ 49.4, “ 1898, “ 54.6					
Episcopalians, “ 1850, “ 6.3, “ 1898, “ 13.					
Reformed, “ 1825, “ 6. , “ 1899, “ 18.6					

And finally, averaging now this last table, we find that the decrease in the five denominations taken together and during the various periods given is from one in twenty to one in thirty-one and one-tenth; a falling off of a little more than one-third.

What has made this falling off in the matter of infant baptism? When we consider that Baptists are the only ones who do not, and have not always, taught that it is a beautiful and holy thing, a duty and an obligation; that by it great blessings are brought to the dear children and safeguards thrown around their lives; but that they have always denied it and fought it, have shown its absurdity in reason and its utter lack of foundation in scripture, while they have taught the true significance of believers' baptism; and when we

consider the great increase in numbers and influence of these same Baptists, there seems but one answer; *they did it.*

Thus the Baptists have been a restraining influence to keep other denominations from suffering to the full the evil results of their own principles, and a leavening influence to permeate them with better principles. Were it not for the Baptists and the printed Bible, which is continually making Baptists, what is to hinder other denominations from speedily falling back to the low level of two hundred years ago? Their principles and doctrinal standards are the same now as then. They have preserved within themselves the seeds out of which the state church and dead formalism grew, and what would hinder the same sort of seed from producing a second time the same sort of a crop? Nay, they have within them the very roots out of which grew the Papacy itself with its awful history; namely sacerdotalism, which shows itself in ministerial rule and government by the Synod and Conference, and sacramentarianism, which shows itself in infant baptism and false views of the Lord's Supper. But for the Baptists, would not infant baptism soon be universally practiced as it was in the middle ages? For do not the creeds of these other churches call for its observance, and do not their pastors teach it as a sacred thing? And would not the infants, when grown, come into the churches as they used to do, by virtue of their baptism and not by virtue of their being born again? Would not these unconverted infants become teachers and preachers, filling the churches with worldliness and false doctrine

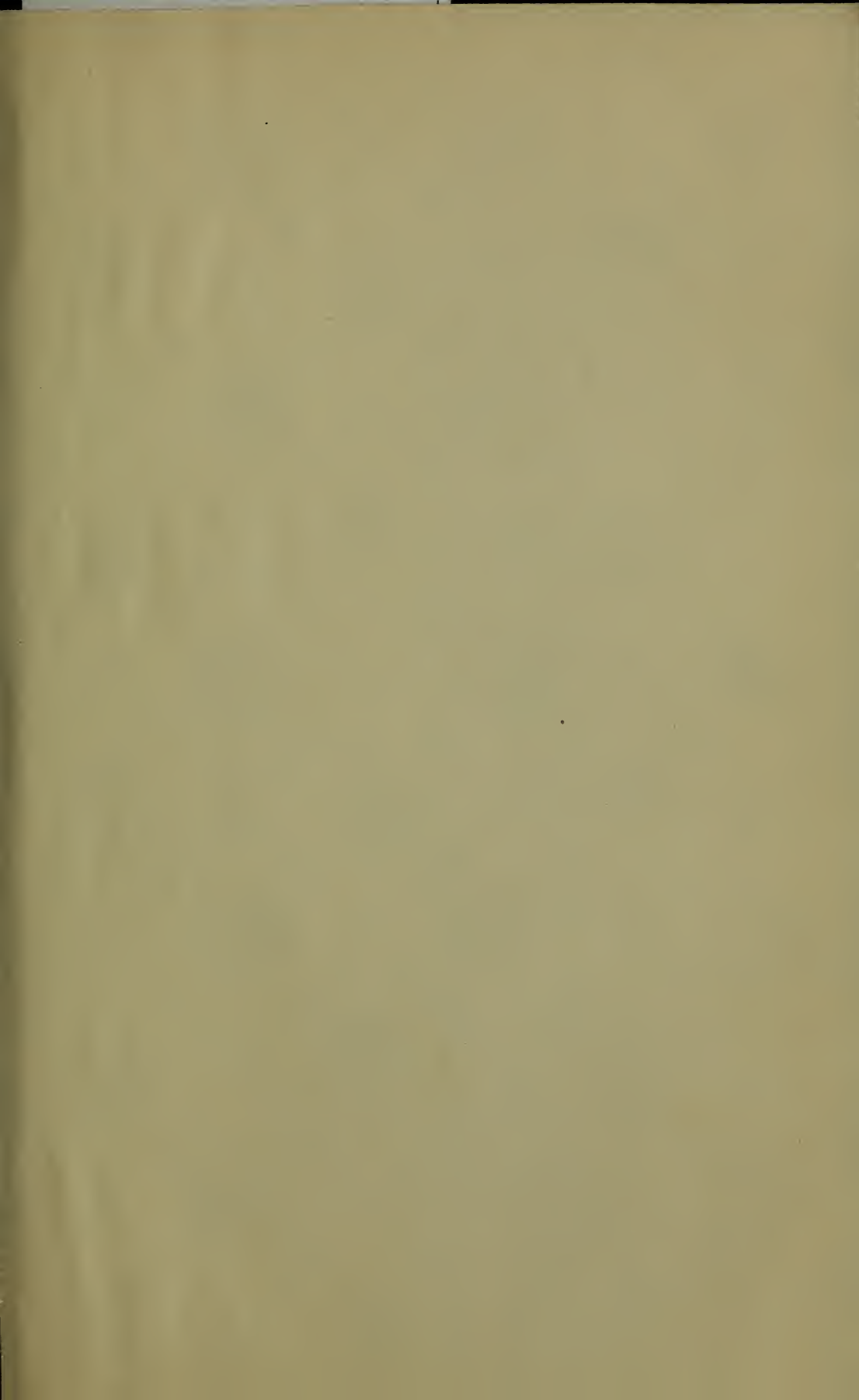
and sin? And would not these false churches thus produced become again oppressors and persecutors of God's true children, filling the land with the groans of of the saints and pursuing true godliness even unto death? I verily believe that the Baptist force is that which upholds and preserves Christendom, and that if they were suddenly annihilated—a consummation which is devoutly to be wished by some narrow minded souls—it would be the greatest calamity that could happen in the religious world as it was in Europe in the sixteenth century.

We have seen now, what Baptists have held as guiding principles, what they have suffered for those principles and what those principles have done for the world; how they have been vital to purity of religion and freedom in government, and how they have brought a spiritual christianity and the broadest liberty where they have come. Surely our holding faithfully to these principles, and in their fulness, is not merely a question of courtesy to other denominations or a matter of mere indifference, but a matter of vital necessity to the purity of christendom and the coming of the kingdom of God in this world. In view of our history we can lift up our heads in the face of anyone and say in the language of Luther, "Here I stand. God help me! I can no other," and feel that we are in the company of those of whom in all the ages we have no need to be ashamed. Here in this land of ours, whose freedom we did so much to secure, we may feel that we have a heritage and a right, for with a great price bought we this freedom.

We need not labor for the triumph of *our name* but for the triumph of the truth, and we may hope for the time when the name will be no longer distinctive. A solemn obligation is upon us forever to insist upon the divine origin of our principles and their entire correctness; to declare them fully and fearlessly in the spirit of love and of a sound mind; to practice them faithfully and honestly until they shall prevail, for prevail they surely will; until everywhere only the regenerate shall be admitted to Christ's church; until complete and willing obedience to Him and Him alone shall be the recognized test of discipleship; until everywhere God's Word is supreme and the fundamental article of our Baptist faith shall be the foundation of the creed of every christian, and CHRIST SHALL BE ABSOLUTELY SUPREME IN HIS OWN CHURCH.



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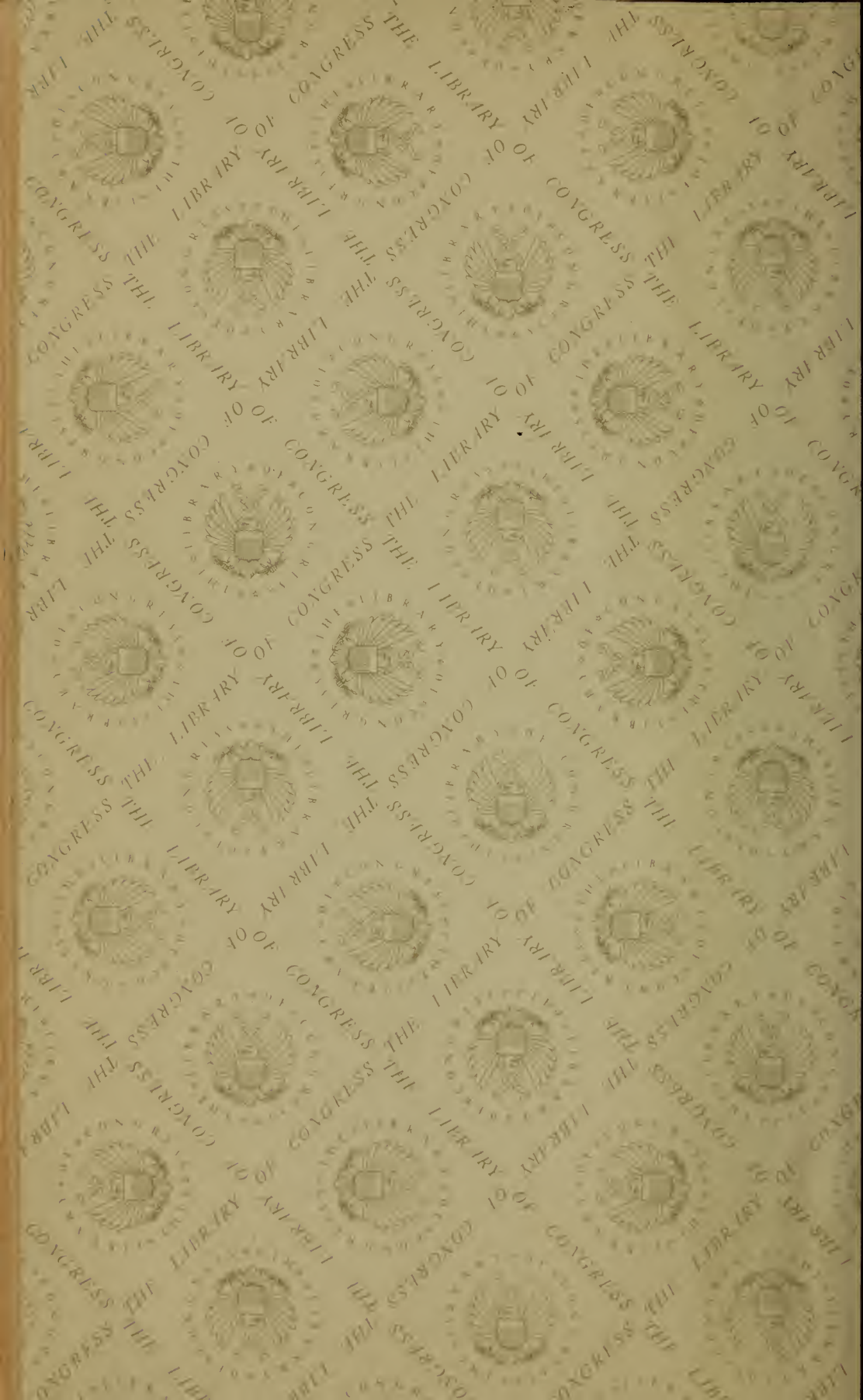


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APPENDIX.--Table of Membership and Baptisms.

YEAR.	PRESBYTERIAN.					METHODIST (North).					CONGREGATIONAL.					EPISCOPAL.					REFORMED.					YEAR.
	Member-ship.....	Adult Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	Infant Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	Member-ship.....	Adult Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	Infant Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	Member-ship.....	Adult Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	Infant Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	Member-ship.....	Adult Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	Infant Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	Member-ship.....	Adult Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	Infant Baptisms	Ratio. One in.....	
1825	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10,076	105	95.9	1,626	6	1825
1826	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	11,260	136	82.8	1,607	7	1826
1827	135,285	2,965	45.6	10,229	13.2	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	10,039	97	103.4	1,252	8	1827
1828	146,308	3,389	43	10,790	13.6	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	13,683	125	109.4	2,211	6	1828
1829	162,816	3,982	41	12,171	13.3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	11,703	110	106.3	1,379	8.4	1829
1830	.....	3,255	.....	12,202	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	14,122	190	74.3	1,760	8	1830
1831	182,017	4,390	41.5	12,198	15	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	14,316	310	46	1,764	8	1831
1832	217,348	9,650	22.5	13,286	16.3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	20,214	589	34.3	2,001	10	1832
1833	233,580	6,950	33.6	14,035	16.6	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	22,469	478	47	2,232	10	1833
1834	247,964	5,738	43.2	13,004	19	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	21,984	265	82.9	2,657	8	1834
1835	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	21,054	187	112.5	1,944	10.8	1835
1836	219,126	2,729	89	11,089	19.7	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	22,604	135	167.4	1,885	11.9	1836
1837	220,557	3,031	72.7	11,697	18.8	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	19,441	109	178.3	1,860	10.4	1837
1838	177,665*	2,692	66	10,164	17.3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	21,923	277	79	2,023	10.8	1838
1839	128,043	1,644	77.9	7,714	16.5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	22,212	319	69.6	1,833	12	1839
1840	126,583	1,741	73	7,844	16	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	23,783	197	120.7	1,860	12.7	1840
1841	134,433	1,842	72.9	8,365	16	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	23,962	277	86.5	1,983	12	1841
1842	140,433	2,748	61	9,567	14.6	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	23,758	253	93.9	1,858	12.2	1842
1843	159,137	4,363	36.4	10,625	14.9	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	29,322	682	43	2,211	13.2	1843
1844	166,487	3,287	50.6	10,996	15	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	31,214	523	59.6	2,183	14.2	1844
1845	171,879	1,929	89	9,608	17.9	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	32,883	217	151.5	2,193	14.9	1845
1846	174,714	2,036	85.8	9,677	18	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	32,209	150	214.7	2,132	15	1846
1847	179,453	1,794	100	9,342	19	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	32,840	169	194.3	2,074	15.8	1847
1848	192,022	2,338	82	9,837	19.5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	34,100	169	201.7	2,013	16.9	1848
1849	200,830	2,412	82.2	9,895	20.3	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	33,980	219	155	2,393	14.2	1849
1850	207,254	2,772	74.8	10,372	20	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	79,987*	2,316	34.5	12,679	6.3	33,553	259	129.5	1,993	16.8	1850
1851	210,306	2,918	72	10,994	19	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	34,586	238	145	2,075	16.6	1851
1852	210,414	2,549	82	11,006	19	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	35,616	224	159	2,370	15	1852
1853	219,263	2,942	74.5	11,644	18.8	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	36,597	350	104.5	2,394	15.2	1853
1854	225,404	3,597	62.6	12,041	18	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	37,020	262	141.3	2,327	15.9	1854
1855	231,404	3,433	67.4	11,734	19.7	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	38,927	290	134.2	2,488	15.6	1855
1856	223,755	3,189	70	11,921	18.6	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	40,413	369	109.5	2,754	14.6	1856
1857	244,825	3,376	72.2	13,007	18.8	709,968	27,583	25.7	27,937	25.4	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	44,443	407	109	3,162	14	1857
1858	259,335	5,170	50	13,984	18.5	768,000	40,915	18.7	37,369	20.5	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	46,197	847	54.4	3,472	13.3	1858
1859	279,630	6,672	41.9	16,194	17.2	832,657	49,191	16.9	38,058	21.8	250,452	10,529	23	5,061	49.4	139,611†	4,907	28.4	24,851	5.6</						

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